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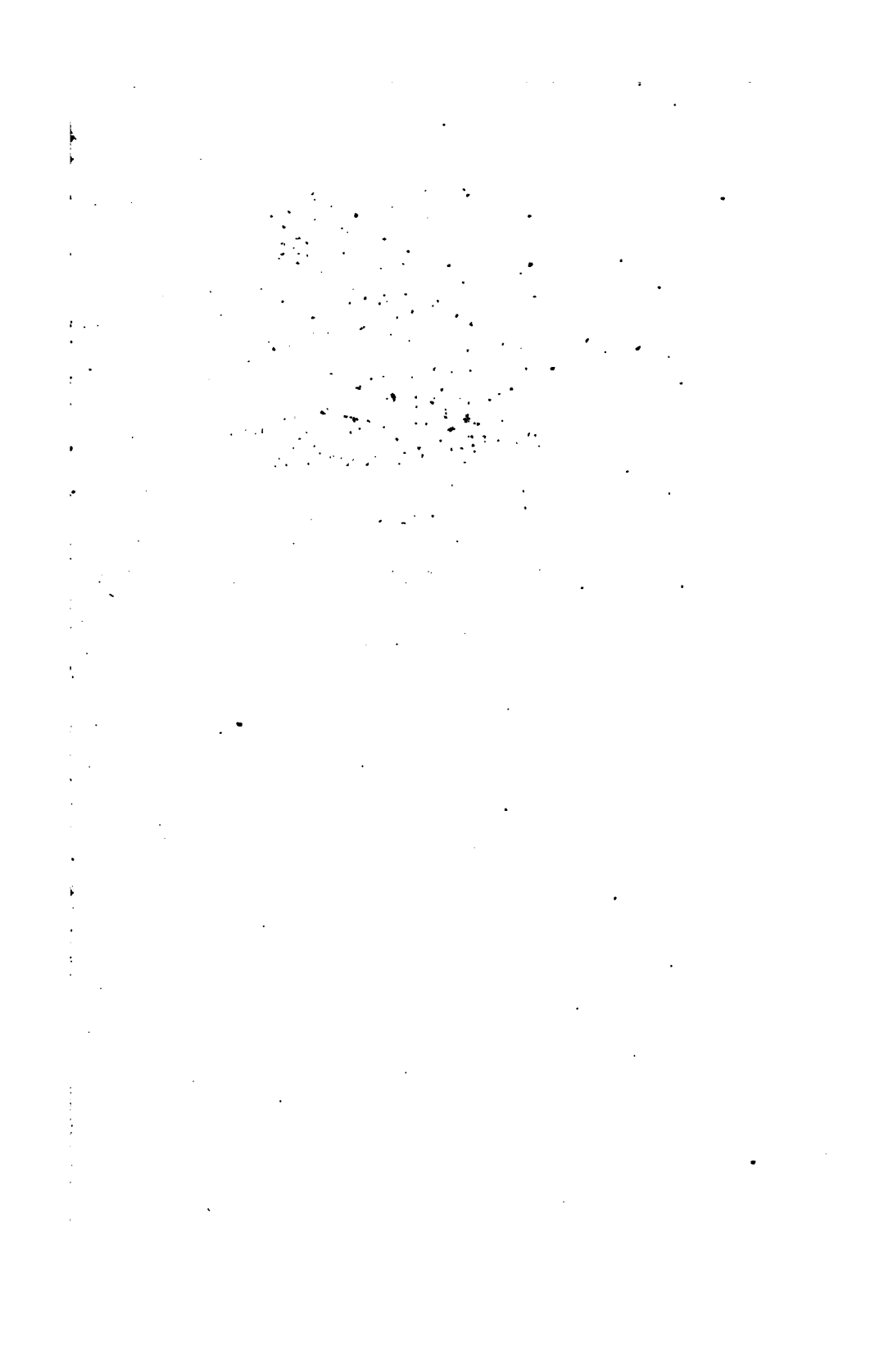
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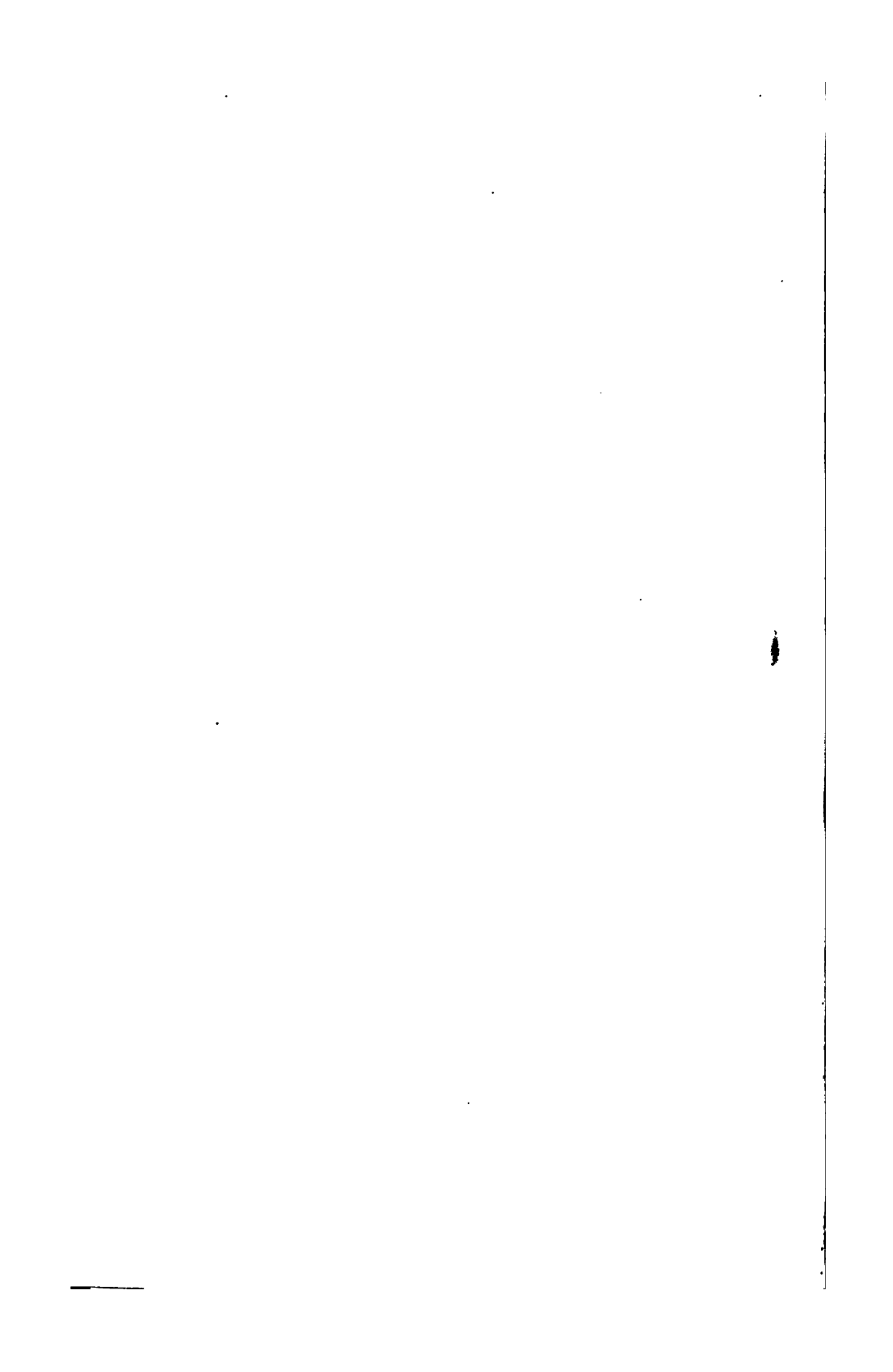
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THE
BRIDAL OF SALERNO:

A Romance.

IN SIX CANTOS.

WITH OTHER POEMS AND NOTES.

BY

JOHN LODGE ELLERTON, M.A.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.

MDCCCXLV.

— 1945 —



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
~~Henry~~,
LORD BROUGHAM AND VAUX,
Sec. Sec. Sec.

THIS
POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY
THE AUTHOR.

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ARGUMENT.

THE scene of the following Romance is laid chiefly at Salerno and Amalfi, in the year 1126; one year before the death of William, the third Duke of Apulia, of the Norman line; and four years before the final and entire subjugation of Amalfi by his successor Roger, "the great Earl of Sicily." With the exception of Bohemond, Tancred, Robert le Guiscard, William and Roger, all the principal personages of my tale are fictitious. The time of action includes a space of twenty-four hours.

CORRIGENDA.

**Page 27, for "No tears bedew the agony,"
read "No tears betray the agony."**

32 and 38, for "Apuglia," read "Apulia."

STANZAS.

OH ! that the harp were mine, whose strings awoke
Loud echoes of the far, romantic time,
When pious Kings and Paladins forsook
Their native land for Syria's burning clime,
Led by a holy fervour, half sublime ;
Or that one spark of the seraphic fire
Were mine, of him who sang in glowing rhyme,
And music all unus'd to modern lyre,
How brave Orlando fought to win his heart's desire !

I may not dare invoke "the tuneful Nine,"
 Since they from heaven no longer deign to move,
 Though often wooed by nobler powers than mine;
 And theirs, like angel-visits from above,
 Were few and far between. No more they love
 To wander earthwards from their seat sublime,
 Where night and day they sing before great Jove,
 And aye did sing before the birth of time,
 Notes of celestial cheer, mix'd with the lute's sweet chime.

So ancient fables tell : but he who fain
 With these blest maids would hold communion high,
 Must climb Parnassus' rugged steep with pain,
 Mid toil and fast, and study hard and dry ;
 With such probation as may purify
 His grosser part, and earthly stain efface ;
 Nor idly deem that he may careless lie,
 Lull'd by the stream that murmurs near its base,
 Yet view the immortal band in their exalted place.

How Bohemond of Antioch fought and bled
 By Jordan's river in the Holy Land ;
 How the pale Saracens before him fled,
 Who, quitting Ardennes for the Syrian strand, ¹
 Held in the Christian league supreme command ;
 Of fair Clorinda's fate,—Argante's curse,—
 Of dark Ismeno of the bloody hand,
 Had I the magic power, I would rehearse
 In many a varied rhyme, and lofty-sounding verse :

Or sing how hosts, of martial bearing high,
 Were thronged in Winton's vast and ancient fane,
 With all the flower of Albion's chivalry,
 Who swell'd the lion-hearted monarch's train,
 Prepar'd with him to brave the stormy main,
 And bid the red-cross banner proudly soar
 Above the Paynim camp on Jaffa's plain ;
 And tell how strange their corslets sounded o'er
 The dim and vaulted aisles, and hollow, tomb-pav'd floor.

But to such lofty strain I may not dare
 To lift my thought, lest in my soaring flight
 Presumptuous Phæton's lot I too might share,
 Who sunk back grovelling from the realms of light,
 Unable to endure the radiance bright
 That streamed around Apollo's burning car,
 Or curb the fiery-winged coursers' might,
 As in their arduous path through fields of air
 They shed celestial light, and gladden worlds afar.

Yet though I may not build "the lofty line,"
 Nor bid my unpretending song aspire
 To celebrate the wars of Palestine,—
 Themes which demand the poet's sacred fire;
 Perchance the broken music of my lyre,
 Though often harsh or feeble be its tone,
 May some faint memory of the age inspire
 When brave Guiscardo, Norman Tancred's son,
 A throne in Puglia's realm by wit and valour won. ²

And thou, my early friend ! who once with me,
 In the brief, joyous time when life was new,
 Roamed through the fairy land of Italy,—
 My steady friend, the ever kind and true,
 Too early lost, whose loss I e'er must rue !
 Thou oft, with patient and indulgent smile,
 Wouldst listen to the dreams my fancy drew,
 Nor think them all unworthy to beguile
 The weary nights that clos'd our morning's grateful toil.

And as the night-wind sigh'd amid the pines,
 Whose dark and spectral branches wav'd around
 Our lonely pathway in the Appenines,
 While past the dizzy steep we slowly wound,
 Oft would we deem we trod enchanted ground,
 And heard the wandering voices of the dead,—
 The mighty of the past, with honour crown'd,—
 Around us in mysterious murmurs shed,
 Who for their native land—for love or glory bled !

Then as my fancy wing'd its airy flight,
And imag'd visions baseless as the wind
That whistled through the dark and stormy night,
Still wouldst thou list with partial smile and kind,
Pass o'er the faults, and humble merits find :
My more than friend in childhood's happy day,
For thee with vain regret my heart hath pin'd,
Whose love unwearied watch'd my youthful way,
And whose fond praise inspir'd full many an artless lay!

THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO FIRST.

THE GARDEN.

INTRODUCTION.

LAND of the sun! whose glowing light
Sheds beauty on the mountain-height,
O'er rock and stream, and tower and dell,
And snowy peak and woodland swell;
Whose influence clothes the vine-topp'd hills
In robe of purple sheen, and fills
The balmy air with faint perfume
From myrtle-thickets white with bloom,
And citron-groves, where brightly gleams
The golden fruit that loves his beams,—
ITALIA! in my joyous prime,
How have I loved thy witching clime!

Thy deep blue sky, thy hills and streams,
That oft inspir'd romantic dreams
Of far-gone times, and deeds of old,
And acts renown'd of knighthood bold,—
Such deeds as in the page divine
Of him, the bard of chivalry,
With more than mortal lustre shine,
Who sang of knightly impress high,³
Of lady-love,—enchanters' hate,
And brave Orlando's hapless fate!
How oft, in days gone by, I've strayed
Where Rome's imperial fountains played,
And mused amid her ruins gray,
Where the slow finger of decay
Her sad, yet softening touch hath laid,
Lending a deep and mournful tone
Of beauty to the mouldering stone,
 In prouder days unknown ;
Where every giant-pile that rears
In hoary state its crest sublime
From out the dim abyss of years,
 Unconquer'd still by Time,—

A record stern of ages gone,
Full many a changeful tale reveals,
And with mute eloquence appeals
 To the bosom sad and lone !
Though empires long have pass'd away,
E'en as the pageant of a day,
Still the bright forms of beauty live,
And their inventor, man, survive :
Still rise superior to decay
The emanations of the soul,
Which own not ruthless Time's control.
Like it, their brightness cannot die,
They share its immortality.
Land of the sun ! amid thy fountains,
Thy haunted groves and purpled mountains,
 The Muses love to dwell ;
And oft awake in notes of fire
The enchanted spirit of the lyre ;
And on thy tuneful sons bestow
 That gift, whose magic spell
Can move the soul with strains of woe,
Or raise to aspirations high,—
 Celestial Melody !

Nations acknowledge thee the first
In beauty, as thou wert in power,
And yield thee homage though thou bear'st
The sceptre of the earth no more :
In solemn majesty, serene,
Thou sitt'st in regal state, a queen,
And through the tears of thy distress,
Still smilest in thy loveliness ;
The Appenines thy rocky girdle seem,
The towering Alps thy snowy diadem !

Not all in vain the pleasing toil,
Which lonely days would oft beguile,
And when all dark appeared, had power
To lighten many a weary hour ;
If that my rude, uncultured rhymes
Could wake some glimmering of the times
Of knighthood and achievement high,
Of gay romance and chivalry ;
When brave Boemondo led to war
His bands, through Syria's plains afar,

And Europe's bold crusaders fought
To win His sepulchre who wrought
Salvation to mankind, and gave
His spotless life the world to save ;
With many a name whose high renown
E'en ages yet unborn shall own,
Whose deeds to aid the cause divine,
Amid the night of time can shine.
Amalfi, too ! thy glories claim
High honour on the rolls of fame,
Though now thy splendours are decayed,
Thy palaces in ruins laid,
And e'en thy children's names forgot,
Who died to guard the barren spot
On which their sires, who fled from Rome,
In elder time had fix'd their home,—
Their memories long have past away,
Unhallowed by the poet's lay ;
Save his, who to the seaman gave
A guide to lead him o'er the wave. *

Hear, then, a tale of days gone by,—
A legend wild of Italy,
When the fierce Norman's sway increased
Through Puglia's fair, romantic land,
And vessels, laden from the East,
Touched at Amalfi's busy strand.

THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO FIRST.

THE GARDEN.

I.

THE midnight air breathes soft and cool
O'er fair Salerno's glassy bay,
Which gleams like some vast waveless pool
Beneath the moonbeam's mellowed ray ;
From where the fitful night-winds creep
Amid the pines that crown yon steep,
Like spirit-voices on the gale,
Whispering in the moonlight pale,
The giant branches wildly moan
Deep music to the murmuring sea ;
Which ever gives its answering tone
Of strange and solemn harmony.

Through tangled shrub, and clustering vine,
That wrap the stem of each tall pine,
The fire-fly shoots with meteor-train,
Now glancing by—now lost again.
Bathed in a stream of silvery light,
Salerno's watch-towers glimmer bright ;
And the hush'd city seems to sleep
In death-like silence, calm and deep :
No voice is heard, save where alone
Yon massive walls in darkness frown,
And from their towering height survey
The deep blue waters of the bay.
Within that castle's pillar'd hall
Which lours above the city wall,
William of Hauteville holds this night
A royal feast, and many a light
Twinkles from open casement high :
Mid distant sounds of revelry
Faint harp-notes steal upon the ear,
With trembling murmurs swelling near
Upon the fitful breeze, and now
Dying away in whispers low ;

Till all is hush'd, and every sound asleep,
Save the light ripple of the chiming deep.

II.

What form is that glides swiftly by,
With stealthy pace and silently ?
And onward to the terrace hies,
Where from the waves the gardens rise
In verdant mounds, until they meet
The castle's proud and lofty seat ?
'Tis strange, at this lone hour of night,
To see a lady richly dight
In festal robe, and jewel'd wreath,
But with the pallid hue of death,
Stealing with noiseless step beneath
The shade of yon tall avenue,
That half conceals her form from view !
Fluttering to the wind's low sigh,
Her snowy vestments in her flight
Stream to the air like vapours light,
That float upon the summer sky ;

But else no sounds come o'er the ear,
To tell that mortal step draws near.
On, on she glides : beneath her tread
The wild-flower scarcely droops its head,
While, like a shadowy form of air,
Moves swiftly on that vision fair !

III.

The marble terrace gain'd, she bends
Over the balustrade, and lends
Her ear, as if to catch some sound
From where the wandering billows bound,
On to the black and frowning steep
That girds Amalfi's rocky shore,
And sternly casts its shadow o'er
The bosom of the slumbering deep.
Surely that eye, distent with fear,
Those hands, clasp'd wildly o'er the breast,
As if to still the heart to rest,
All tell of dread and danger near.
And hark ! the sounds of revelry,
Borne on the night-wind's feeble sigh,

From yon high towers swell faintly by,
And reach her ear.—In frantic haste
The damsel snatches from her waist
A scarf of rich embroidery,

And waves it o'er the deep :
Long, long in vain that sign she waves ;
No friendly bark approaches near,—
No answering signal greets her ear,
Save of the restless flood that heaves
Against the moonlit steep.

IV.

Again she listens,—and again
Waves high the scarf : but still in vain !

She shrieks Goffredo's name,—
Hangs o'er the deep with frenzied eye,
Then looks to heaven imploringly,—
No tears bedew the agony

That rends her quivering frame ;
Her flowing hair, with sea-drops wet,
Streams o'er the marble parapet ;

Her soft cheek rests upon the stone,
Whose whiteness fades beside its own ;
Her eyes are closed,—the throbbing heart,
That vibrates wildly through each part
Of the frail form, alone gives sign
That life yet dwells in its fair shrine !

* * * * *

V.

Hark ! 'tis the midnight chime,
Pealing slow and mournfully—
From holy Matthew's temple rung, ⁶
It tells, with hoarse, relentless tongue,
Of yet another day gone by,
From life's brief sum of time !

VI.

How many hear that midnight bell !
The gay and happy throng who dwell
Mid thoughtless pleasure's wild career,
Who for the morrow have no fear,
Nor dream that aught exists on earth
Save revelry and idle mirth ;
And they who vainly seek repose,
For brief oblivion of their woes,
Thinking of days they loved so well,
Now start to hear that solemn bell !
It meets the ear of those who keep
Their anxious watch, in silence deep,
O'er the death-couch of one they love ;
And, like a warning from above,
Peals forth to them a boding strain,
As if to tell them hope were vain.
The doomed prisoner, in his cell,
Trembles to hear that midnight bell
He careless heard in happier years,
Ere guilty sorrow came, and tears.

He shudders !—For the last, *last* time,
He hears that once unheeded chime :
Oh, warning often heard in vain !
That solemn sound proclaims again,—
“ While yet ye may, take heed of time,
And think that ere to-morrow’s chime
Tolls slowly forth the midnight hour,
E’en ye, who list, may be no more ! ”

VII.

So thought Goffredo. On his ear
Sounded that bell like note of fear ;
As if some presage fraught with dread,
Some mournful augury he read
In the deep, sullen, measur’d tone,
The knell of time for ever flown !
While the last echo dies away
In lingering murmurs o’er the bay,
He nears the garden-terrace’ side,
Where trees o’erhang the sparkling tide,
Guiding with muffled oar his bark
Under the dropping foliage dark :—

The shallop moor'd, with one light bound
He gains the summit of the mound.

VIII.

With anxious brow he hurries on :
He hears a low and stifled moan.—
What sees he there?—His own lov'd maid,
On the cold terrace senseless laid !
Half wild with fear he chafes her hand,—
Her name rings o'er the lonely strand—
Then softly whispers in her ear,
Her lover—her betrothed is near !
She hears him not,—he calls in vain :
Like a fair lily bent with rain,
Her drooping head his shoulder pressed,
Unconscious of its place of rest.
And then the sad and chilling thought
That he might lose that gem, unbought
By the world's wealth,—that prize so rare—
The spotless love of maiden fair,
Not won by lure of sordid gain,
Almost to madness wrung his brain !

Oft had he met her there alone,
Had sate with her on yon grey stone ;
And with sweet talk beguiled the night,
Until the dawn, with envious light,
Told them how swift the hours were fled.
Oh ! lovers know how soon are sped
Those precious moments seized by stealth ;
To them far dearer than the wealth
That flows from Chili's golden mines,
Or mid her sands of amber shines !

IX.

Then their discourse was all of love,
And hope that fondly, vainly strove
To overlook the dark abyss
That frown'd 'twixt them and happiness.
The daughter of Salerno's prince,
From Norman Tancred's lineage sprung,—
Tancred, the lord of Hauteville, whence ?
Came he whose fame hath oft been sung,
Giscard ! her valiant sire, who won
By arms and wit Apuglia's throne :

The daughter of this princely race,
Who from such source their life-blood trace,
Of regal strain and lineage pure,—
She might not wed a youth obscure ;
But love, whom prudence ne'er restrains,
The warnings of mischance disdains ;
Blinded by him, all madly think,
E'en when they tread destruction's brink,
For them will rise some happy chance,
Feign'd in the pages of romance,—
At least for *them*, though well, too well, they know
How swift the hopes of others end in woe !

X.

And oft-times when before they met,
When flowers with midnight-dews were wet,
They strove each other to beguile
With thoughts that fate e'en yet would smile
Upon their love, until they deemed
That all were true they wildly dreamed ;
Forgetful that the stroke of fate
Will fall at last, though it fall late :

And whelm in ruin more complete
Those unprepared the blow to meet;
Who, careless of the storm that lours
In darkness ere its wrath it pours,
Fondly believe 'twill pass away,
Nor long o'erhang the face of day.
So upon some blue Alpine lake,
All calm and still ere winds awake,
A summer bark glides gaily by,
Impelled by evening's balmy sigh:
The helmsman trusts the treacherous sky,
Nor heeds the gale that rises far,
Where Jungfrau rears her giant form,
The cloudy dwelling of the storm,
Where sleep the powers that shake the air,—
The thunder peal,—the lightning's wreath,—
The lawine's roar,—the whirlwind's breath.—
Sudden the blast, with rushing force,
Sweeps all in its resistless course,
And buries deep beneath the waves
The fair and fragile bark, nor leaves

A wreck behind of what, e'en now,
Cleft the blue lake with fearless prow.

* * * * *

XI.

Like to a flower that fades away,
Pallid and wan the maiden lay:
Her lover bent in mute despair
And wonder o'er that form so fair!
He felt her ringlets as they strayed
Forth from their jewelled wreath,
And o'er his burning temples played,
Stirred by the night-wind's breath;
Like fairy tendrils of the vine,
That flutter round the lofty pine.
Closed were her eyes, and pale her cheek,
Save where a faint and hectic streak,
Like vein in Parian marble, showed
That still the life-warm current flowed.

XII.

At length a deep and shuddering sigh,
Wrung from the burthened heart's distress—
The listless limbs moved wearily,
Proclaimed returning consciousness.
Faintly the maid unclosed her eyes,
With feeble effort fain would rise—
Then sunk, and veiled them quick again,
As if to hide a world of pain.—
“Look up, sweet Isolina! Say,
What sudden grief o'ercasts thy brow?
Droop not, my love! Be far away
All thought of ill or danger now!
Ah! calm thy breast and banish fear,
For he who loves thee best is near—
Goffredo calls thee!” At that name
A wild start shook her trembling frame,
Her lover's welcome tones she knew!—
One fearful glance around she threw—
Then rose, and hung upon his neck,
Weeping as if her heart would break.

The o'ermastering burst of feeling past,
And agony too fierce to last,
Into a calm, that look'd like rest,
And which but mock'd the aching breast,
She sunk. Goffredo in her ear
Whisper'd soft words to lull her fear ;
Until, as memory slowly woke,
With faltering accents thus she spoke.—

XIII.

“ Sure 'twas some trance, with horror fraught,
Whose fearful shapes yet chill my heart,
And bid these drops of anguish start—
Methought a page a message brought,
Saying my royal father sought
My presence in the banquet hall
This very night !—To tell thee all
I scarce have power ; my throbbing brain
Whirls madly 'neath its weight of pain :
What mean these robes ? yon lights that gleam—
This festal wreath ?—'Twas, then, no dream !

The fated blow is come at last,
'Tis ours life's bitterness to taste—
Love's brief and happy day is o'er,
And we are doomed to meet no more !
Thou knowest I am the promised bride
Of Roger, to our race allied,
Sicilia's Earl.—This day he came
My father's fatal pledge to claim.
I knew it not—in my lone bower
I sat and charmed the lingering hour
With thoughts of thee, and of this night—
How oft I chid time's tardy flight !
When suddenly the mandate came—
A boding horror shook my frame
With nameless dread !—Could it be true
The hour was come ? I ever knew
It was my father's fondest prayer,
To see me wedded to his heir :
Apuglia, torn with strife within,
Invaded by the Saracen,—
By a dark host of ills dismayed,
Implores our kinsman's powerful aid.

Too soon I knew the Earl was come,
And then I could but guess my doom.
At length the banquet-hour drew nigh—
I heard the sounds of revelry
Strike dull and heavy on my heart,
Bidding all hope from thence depart.
They led me trembling to my seat,
You might have heard my heart's wild beat—
I scarcely breathed or moved for fear,
My very soul was in mine ear !—
A trumpet-note rang through the hall :
Forebodings dark my soul appal—
 I shuddered at the sound ;
I heard the herald's voice proclaim
Earl Roger's proud and dreaded name,—
 I dared not look around ;
I felt his lip touch my cold cheek,
Aghast, I heard my father speak,
And bid me greet the Knight who came
From far, his promised bride to claim !
I was as one transform'd to stone,
All sense of outward objects gone,—

No tear stood in mine eye :
I think that had I tarried there
Another moment, I had ne'er
Survived to tell my cruel tale ;
Nor lived, bereft of hope, to wail
Our hapless destiny !
At length, with words of love, my sire
Bade me to my lone bower retire ;
Excuse for maiden-terrors framed,
And my betrothed's indulgence claimed.
My chamber gained, my attendants gone,
I sought the secret stair alone,
And hastening hither, found not thee—
I shrieked thy name in agony !
The waves alone gave back reply."

XIV.

Thus spoke the damsel her sad tale,
With faltering voice and cheek all pale.
Goffredo fain his grief would hide,
While with fond accents he replied,—

“ Beloved, calm thee ! weep no more ;
Our doubts and fears may soon be o’er,
If thou consent to fly with me
Over yon blue and tranquil sea.—
Ah ! think not, love, I lingered late :
Under the pine-trees doomed to wait,
I feared till now to quit their shade,
And cross the moonlight-wreath that played
Too bright beneath the cliff, where stands
The fortress which the port commands ;
And where the glassy waves reflect
No trees, whose shadows might protect
 From view my slender bark.
I knew not why, but still my breast
Since morning’s dawn had been oppressed
 With many a boding dark :
Some mournful dream had marred my rest,
Leaving me harassed and distressed,
Though of a shape so undefined,
I scarce could call it back to mind.
But dry those tears ; despond not, love !
Goffredo fain would die to prove

His constancy and truth to thee,—
Prepared with thee yon main to rove,
And seek a home of liberty;
Some blooming isle beyond the seas,
With limpid brooks, and shady trees,
Where we may wander, blest and free,
Safe from a father's tyranny.
Then shrink not, love! the night is fair;
No gale disturbs the balmy air:
This arm athwart the silver tide
Shall swift and safe the pinnace guide.
Come, then! Or wouldst thou stay and wed,
With Roger to the altar led?
Or worse, dragg'd there by brutal force?
Thou know'st he cannot feel remorse!"

XV.

"I'd rather die!" the maiden cried,
"Than live our hated kinsman's bride!
Yet now I may not, dare not fly—
'Twere best—a daughter's part—to try

With tears my father's heart to move—
The story of our plighted love—
And how thy vigorous arm did save
His child from the devouring wave,
When raving winds, and billows dark,
Menaced to overwhelm my bark,—
All this he knows not.—Should I fail,
Should tears and prayers no more prevail
To bend his once kind heart, I swear
To-morrow's moon shall see our flight,—
I'll meet thee here at dead of night :
Ah ! think not that I harbour fear—
'Tis that my father's love is dear !
I am his all,—the only one
Left to support his failing years,
He will be friendless, childless, lone,
With nought but an old age of tears,
 When I, his hope, am gone !
But take this scarf : it once was hers,
Whose long-lost love my soul yet stirs,
Though many a sad and gloomy year
Hath vanished since she left us here :

It was my mother's ! Think not I
Could violate the sanctity
Of such a holy pledge !
I vow by this, my trial o'er,
To thread the unknown path once more,
To meet thee on the moonlit shore,
By the blue water's edge ;
And sailing o'er yon sparkling sea,
Trust all beside to Heaven and thee ! ”

XVI.

The damsel ceased : a mournful smile,
That looked like hope, lit her pale face ;
E'en then her griefs could not efface
The dreams that lovers' hearts beguile :
Sweet visions passed before her eye
Of love, and holy constancy,—
Of all that from above is given
To make this wilderness a heaven !
But quickly fled that smile away,
Like sunshine from the face of day :

Dark thoughts returned in gloomy train,
And brought despondency again.
Goffredo urged to flight in vain :
He vowed “ ’twere madness to delay,—
That he could ne’er survive the pain
Of yet another weary day ! ”
Until she half resolved to fly.
And then her father’s agony,
The love of years all flung away,—
His childless grief,—perhaps his curse !
“ Ah, no ! she would essay
To melt his heart ; ’twould not be worse,
E’en did she fail : their last resource
(That filial duty paid) were flight.
She would return the following night ;
Her pledge was given,—ah ! well he knew
Her love was his, her heart was true ! ”

XVII.

With many a fond reluctant look,
Slowly their lingering way they took

Back through the lofty avenue,
Whose foliage veiled their forms from view,
Mid orange-groves besprent with bloom,
That fill'd the air with faint perfume.
Her fairy hand his shoulder pressed,
His circling arm her slender waist :
Ah ! cruel 'twere two hearts to sever,
Which should be thus united ever !
If there be aught of bliss on earth,
'Tis love like theirs that gives it birth ;
Without it, what is wealth to thee ?
It cannot give thee happiness,
Nor genius, fame, nor high degree,
Can cheer the sad heart's loneliness,
Which ever pants for sympathy,—
For that sweet feeling only known,
When two devoted hearts are one.
Emerging from the leafy maze,
They stood beneath the shadowy cave,
To which the secret passage gave ;⁸
Then poured their souls in one fond gaze,

As each, with almost breaking heart,
Confessed how bitter 'twas to part !

XVIII.

Oh ! life is passed in airy dreams,
That smile mid danger and distress ;
Or chequered with delusive gleams,
Shed by the phantom, Happiness,
Who glads us haply for a time ;
But chill'd, alas ! by earth's cold clime,
Soon waves her wing, and seeks on high
Her habitation in the sky.
When she appears, the streamlet's voice
Seems in her presence to rejoice ;
And Nature's music fills the air,
While hovers near that vision fair.
Yet scarce alights she, ere the sight
Becomes familiar with the light
That beams around, almost too bright
For mortal eye to bear ;
On radiant wing again she flies,
And to her native region hies.

So meteor-fires, with dazzling gleam,
Athwart the midnight desert stream,
And, flashing by, elude the sight,
Leaving us plung'd in deeper night,—
Wrapt in a darkness more intense,
More painful to the aching sense.
Oh! life is passed in dreams of bliss,
Unsuited to a world like this,
Which cheat us with vain hopes of joy,
We ne'er may taste without alloy!

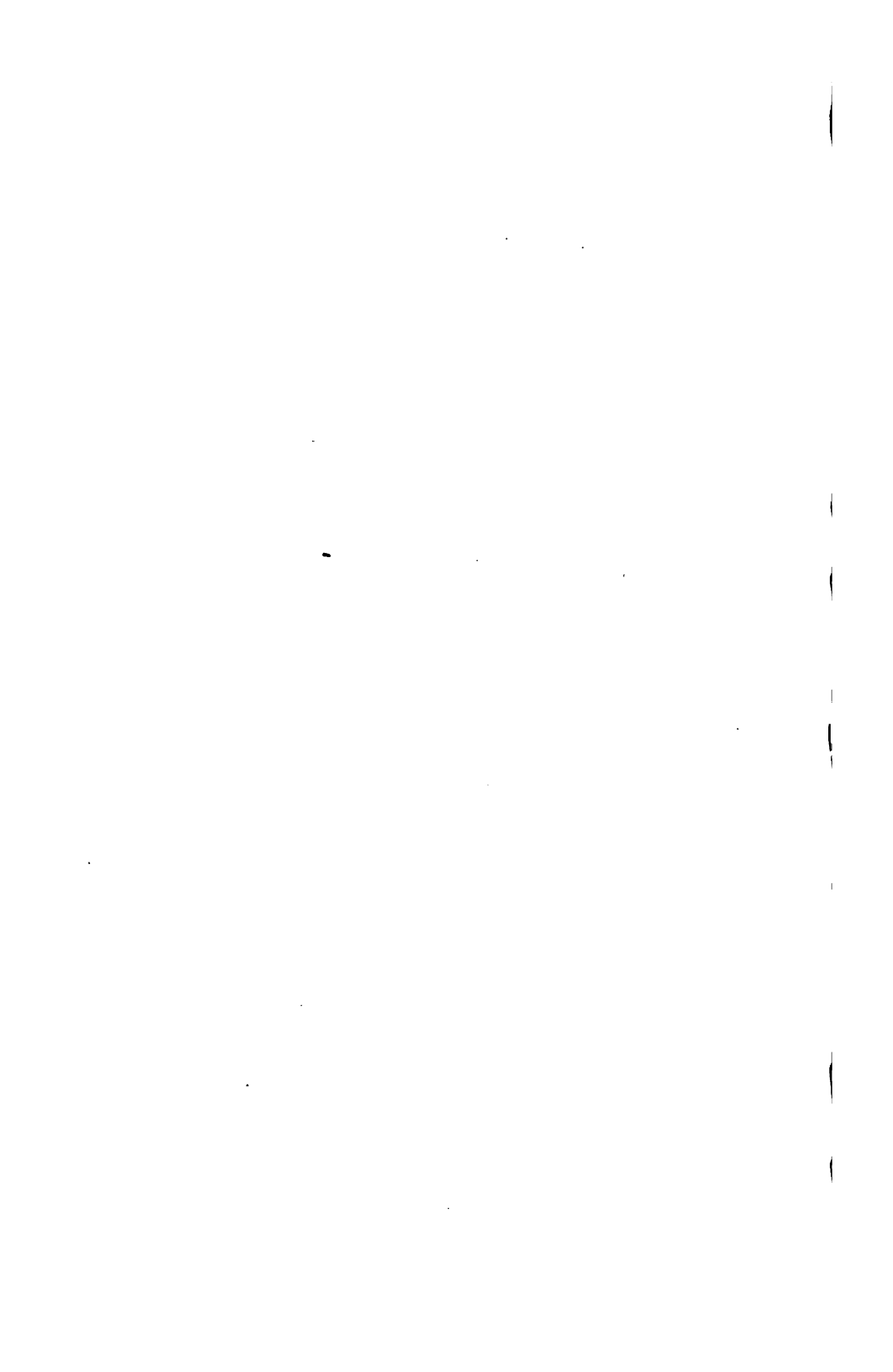
END OF CANTO I.

THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO SECOND.



THE BANQUET.



THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO SECOND.

THE BANQUET.

I.

WITH joyous notes of revelry
Salerno's palace yet resounds ;
Mid lofty strains of minstrelsy,
Ring high the beaker's silvery sounds :
Pendant in many a blazing row
From the arched roof, the cressets glow,
Shedding abroad a vivid ray,
Might emulate the light of day,
Upon the glittering board below.

In solemn train and knightly state,
The Prince prolonged the banquet late,
Mid ceremonial quaint and high,
And gorgeous pomp of chivalry ;
For in that heavenly clime, where night
Oft seems a day of chastened light,
Whose balmy whispers breathe of heaven,
The midnight hours to mirth are given,
To music and festivity :
And many a bright and generous draught,
To the royal pair that night was quaff'd ;
Oft filled each guest the goblet high
To the great Earl of Sicily,
And Isolina, his fair bride,
The loveliest maid in Puglia's boundary wide.

II.

Clad in a flowing robe of gold,
Duke William keeps his regal state,
Surrounded by his barons bold,
Who in long order near him sate ;

Descendants of the warlike band
That came from Gallia's distant land,
Led by brave Guiscard, Tancred's son,
Who rich Apuglia's sceptre won.
A troubadour of no mean fame
Was William ; skilful he to frame
The poet's wild and varied lay,
To sing of knight, and lovely dame,
 And beauty's sovereign sway;
He better loved the minstrel-strain
Than note of drum, or warlike train,
Than armour's clang, and battle-plain,
 Or chivalrous array.
Not his the prowess that had won
For his great sire Salerno's throne ;
The magic of the minstrel's lays,
And lofty deeds of other days,
 In thrilling numbers told,
Far better liked his peaceful mood
Than tented field, and foray rude,
 And banner high unrolled.

The splendours of his far-famed court,
Renowned as learning's chief resort,
Tempted to fair Salerno's strand
The youth of many a distant land.

III.

With gloomy air, in absent mood,
Earl Roger sate beside the prince.
O'er some dark thought he seemed to brood;
Oft would his restless eye evince
How ill he brooked the festive scene :
His haughty brow foretold, I ween,
But little joy to his young bride,
Fair Isolin, Salerno's pride.
You would have deemed him fitter far,
To lead a martial host to war,
Than breathe in beauteous maiden's ear
The accents to young lovers dear :
Hateful to him such scenes as these,
Whose spirit scorned ignoble ease ;
His element the battle-plain,

He loathed the gay and brilliant train
Of William's court: the minstrel's strain
Possessed no charm for his rude ear,
Which loved the sound of bugle clear;—
The clang of arms,—the drum's loud roll,—
These were the notes that stirred his soul!

IV.

His crispèd locks and clear blue eye
Bespake his Norman lineage;
Nor lacked he of the courtesy,
Which in that high, romantic age,
Belonged to every gallant knight,
Whose valour, as his armour bright,
Was deemed imperfect and untrue,
Unless it were as polished too.
But ever and anon, the mood
Of his fierce bosom, used to blood
And scenes of rapine, spurned control,
And soon o'erleapt the feeble fence
Of state, and knightly deference;
Ambition only fired his soul—

No place was there for love to hide ;
Why sought he, then, a youthful bride—
The heir of Puglia's ducal throne,
Lord of the richest, loveliest land
The golden sun looks down upon—
What moved him thus to claim the hand
Of her, whose heart he had not won ?
It was his aim, by holy tie,
To form alliance with the line
Of the old Lombard dynasty, ⁹
Which ended in fair Isolin :
For still, amid the ancient race,
The lapse of time could not efface
The jealous feeling, which of old
Sprung up against the stranger-band,
Who gained dominion in their land
By feats of arms and venture bold.
To soothe the angry feeling bred
 Against the Norman name,
Guiscardo to the altar led
 A bold and warlike dame,

A daughter of the exiled house,
Sikelgäita was her name,¹⁰
Fit mate for such a spouse ;
She fought with him in battle-field,
And well the ponderous lance could wield ;
Full many a knight to her might yield,
And yet not deem it shame.

V.

The offspring of this martial fair
Was Roger, Puglia's second duke,
(Unworthy son of such a pair!) ¹¹
He for his ample birthright took,
By Guiscard's will, Salerno's throne ;
Who thus deprived his first-born son,
The brave Boemondo, Europe's pride, ¹²
His issue by a Norman bride,
Of his just right. In lieu he gave
A sceptre in the distant land
Which swift Orontes' waters lave ; ¹³
That city of the Syrian strand,

Near which old Daphne's cedars tower, ¹⁴
Famed Antioch, owned Boemondo's power. ¹⁵
'Twas thus the usurper strove to gain
The Lombard faction to his side ;
And, with the ancient stem allied,
To strengthen his uncertain reign.

VI.

Silent and thoughtful sate the bard,
Whose name all Christendom had heard ;
With Raimond's fame Salerno rung,
His skill the theme of every tongue,—
Raimond, the prince of troubadours !
Whose magic strain all hearts allures :
For prince and peasant homage pay
To the rare gift that frames the lay,
In which heroic deeds survive
The transient space their authors live,
Bequeathing to their memory,
The boon of immortality.
His were the speaking tones that drew
From beauty's eye the pearly dew,

That feeling weeps when music's spell
Wakens the hidden thoughts that dwell
Within the bosom's deep recesses,
Whose trembling sympathy confesses
Her voice, the voice of passion too—
Powerful its throbbings to renew,
Or summon dreams of days again,
When life was yet undimm'd by pain.

VII.

To see the bard, you scarce had thought
That in him dwelt such powers as wrought
Upon the heart that mystic spell,
Which harmony can breathe so well,
When the lyre owns a master's hand,
Whose skill its magic can command,
Until he wakened on the chords
Music more eloquent than words:
Then beam'd his eye with living fire,
As the wild notes his theme inspire,

That bid the careless listener own
A thrilling pathos, all unknown,
In that deep language of the soul,
That spake at Genius' high control.
Perchance some forty winters now
Had left their traces on his brow,
And thinned the locks that once had spread
In clustering masses o'er his head :
That thoughtful brow, and cheek so pale,
Of passion's strife told many a tale ;
And oft the involuntary sigh,
Still heard, though stifled instantly,
Sure token of the heart's unrest,
Revealed a grief within his breast,
Where some distressful memory dwelt,
Whose rankling poison yet was felt.
Oh ! music's spirit oft descends
On those whom secret sorrow rends,
Stirring the founts of melody,
That deep within the bosom lie.
What recks the bard the wreath is won,
If still the heart be sad and lone ?

The laurel-crown that decks his brow,
But mocks the chilled and lonely breast,
As wintry roses mid the snow
Rear their pale buds with verdure dressed,
And coldly blossom o'er a waste,
By print of human step untraced.

VIII.

And now the choral strain had ceased ;
Bright draughts prolonged the midnight feast,
Amid the music's pause : who knew,
Or heeded, how the moments flew ?
But all remembered well how rare
The intervals of anxious care !
“ Why pensive thus, and sad of cheer ? ”
(Thus spake the Duke). “ Good Raimond, clear
That troubled brow, and o'er thy lyre
Bid music breathe in notes of fire !
Waken some old familiar strain,
May call back former scenes again ;—
Or sing to us a legend high,
Of beauty bright, and chivalry ;

Or how Boemondo led the fight,
And vanquished many a gallant knight,
When Christians in the cause divine,
Fought for the cross in Palestine.”
Started the bard at that great name!
Was it the crimson flush of shame
 That lit his swarthy brow?
Anon he swept the pealing strings,
The sound some bitter memory brings,
 It died in accents low.
He paused again: a sparkling tear
Stood in that eye so dark and clear;
A moment seemed he lost in thought,
Then quickly dashed those drops away—
Once more the chords his fingers sought,
Preluding to his minstrel-lay;
He struck at first a few low notes,
Whose sad and plaintive murmuring floats
Upon the air, like the night breeze
That sighs in summer through the trees.

IX.

Raïmond's Song.

Oh, the golden days of old !
When youth and hope were ours,
And each succeeding morn that told
Of time's swift flight, brought joyous hours,
In the golden days of old !

Oh, the golden days of old !
Ere sorrow came, and tears,
And those dear friends, the loved, the true,
Whose partial smile our childhood knew,
Yet watched our youthful years !

Those golden hours are sped,
With all their brilliant train,
And many an eye that on us then
The light of calm affection shed,
Will never beam again !

Since those who loved are gone,
And those *we* love, grow cold,
Let music's voice awake a tone,
An echo of the memories flown,
Of those golden days of old !

X.

The minstrel ceased ; but yet the sound
In murmurs seemed to hover round :
No loud applause was heard to break
The charm of feeling deep which spake
In the low, simple air that wrought
Some spell on all. The art untaught,
Except by Nature's self, awoke
Those thrilling notes ; and in them spoke
The trembling music of the heart,
Which feeling only can impart,
Striking a chord within the listener's breast,
Whose answering tone the master's power confessed.

XI.

The Prince fill'd high a cup of wine—
“ Raimond ! this golden cup is thine.
Take it ; by thee 'tis fairly won,
Since, of all minstrels, thou alone
Know'st that deep spell of music's strain
Can wake forgotten thoughts again,—
Could bid this joyous company,
Pause mid its festive revelry !
Well hast thou shown the master's art,
And proved thy power to move each heart.
But leave such mournful themes as these ;
Some knightly tale would better please,
Or legend of the holy war,
Fought for the Cross in lands afar.”

XII.

The proffered gift the minstrel took
With humble mien and downcast look,
Then checked the rising sigh ;
For he remembered well the time,
In the gay season of his prime,
How his heart had oft beat high,

And his cheek with conscious pride had glowed,
When beauty's self the prize bestowed,
Hallowing the tribute with a tear,
That homage most to poets dear !
Unheeded was the triumph now,
Since those were lost to him below
Who once his youthful glories shar'd,
Whose smile had been his best reward.
But hark ! to chase dark thoughts of pain,
He wakes a bolder, loftier strain.

XIII.

Song.

The evening wind blows freshly o'er the deep,
The fountains scatter liquid pearls,
Stirring the dreamy air which seemed to sleep ;
The awakened breeze the flag unfurls,
That waves on high above yon frowning tower,
Where dark Ismeno holds his lofty seat of power.

Nature's ethereal music fills the air
 With harmony less heard than felt,
The sounds of leaves and waters murmuring near,
 In one melodious cadence melt:
And hark ! with pensive note the bird of night
Charmeth the listening ear with sad yet calm delight.

Who would have deemed that crime dwelt darkly there,
 Mid scenes where nature loveliest seems ?
How strange that where she blooms most rich and fair,
 Where pours the sun his brightest beams,
Man oftentimes from his high, primal state,
Should deepest fallen be, and most degenerate !

Within the precincts of yon massive tower,
 Which rules in gloom the mountain's brow,
Where nodding battlements in darkness lower
 Over the peaceful vale below,
Ah, me ! such deeds are done as shun the light,
Deeds fit for solitude, and gloom of blackest night !

Oft are sad wailings heard upon the blast,
And shrieks and groans assail the ear
Of lated pilgrim, as he hurries past
Yon dismal, dark abode of fear,
Where dwells Ismeno of the bloody hand,
The ruthless scourge and dread of Syria's blooming land.

He was a mighty sorcerer, of power
To summon dead men from the grave,
And rule the spirits of the midnight hour
By spells, which might appal the brave
To hear alone,—for who could bear the sight !
'Twas said the ponderous walls would totter with their might.

E'en at his name the peasant's cheek grew pale,
To them a mystic word of fear ;
And none who dwelt in that luxuriant vale,
To his dark mansion ventured near :
He best had dared the famished tiger's lair,
For none had e'er returned who once had entered there.

Who climbs yon pathway at this lonely hour ?
A fearless wight is he, I ween,
Thus, at the time when midnight spells have power,
To seek the dreaded wizard's den ;
A cross is blazoned on his armour bright,
And his accoutrements bespeak a Christian knight.

Slowly his steep and dangerous way he wends
On to the castle's ample gate ;
But as he high and higher still ascends,
The distance seems not to abate,
Although, since first the drear ascent he tried,
He had mounted full a league the rocky mountain's side.

Yet still above, at equal distance, lay,
As when he left the level plain,
The embattled towers in long and fair array,
And majesty of warlike train :
Beneath his feet the fleecy clouds were rolled,—
E'en this could not appal Boemondo's spirit bold.

He looked around ; but now no more perceived
The fertile plain, nor moonlit deep :
Beneath, a sea of heavy vapours heaved,
And his late path had grown so steep,
You might have dropped a stone from that high place
Into the sea of clouds, nor grazed the mountain's face !

He looked above : Ismeno's dark abode
Frowned there in dreadful majesty ;
Still on the peerless knight undaunted strode,
With frame untired and courage high. .
'Twas well ; for had his heart one moment quailed,
He was for ever lost,—his venture bold had failed.

He humbly bent his knee, and breathed a prayer,
The knight whom danger could not daunt ;
He signed the Cross,—strange voices filled the air ;
He rose, and gained the enchanter's haunt.
Few steps did bring him to the portal wide ;
But entrance to make good, long time in vain he tried.

At length a silver shield descried he there,
Thrice struck he on it with his sword ;
A sound as of a trumpet filled the air,
The gates, flung back, free path afford,
E'en while the echoes of that mighty sound,
Like bursting thunder-clouds, reverberate around.

Boemondo entered, and the brazen gates
Closed on him with a deafening crash :
What dire adventure our good knight awaits,
Who entered there with footsteps rash,
Shall form the subject of another strain :
Now breathe we for a space, then strike the harp again.

XIV.

Ere yet the minstrel's tale was o'er,
Footsteps were heard in the corridor ;
And hark ! was that a woman's cry,
That lengthened wail of agony ?

Strangely the dreary note of fear
Sounded amid the festal cheer;
Yet not more strange the tear of woe
In scenes of reckless mirth should flow,
Than that grim Death his state should hold
Unheeded midst the proud and cold!
A man-at-arms approached the Duke;
Hurried his step, and pale his cheek—
Again another piercing shriek

The vaulted ceiling shook.

“What means yon sound? Thou look'st aghast!
Methought my daughter's voice—Again
That wild and piteous cry of pain!
Be quick!”

“My liege, few moments past,
The guard, whose duty 'tis to keep
The nightly watch above the steep
Which bounds the royal garden's side,
Under the wall a bark descried,
Where from the mound the branches bend,
And to the water's brink descend—

Suspicion roused, he called his band ;
The gardens scoured at his command,
Beneath a thicket's shade they spied
A stranger, who alone defied,
And fierce opposed, the might of all,
As one whom death could not appal.
Slippery with his foeman's blood
Became the ground on which he stood :
He staggered—fell ; a shriek arose
Distinct above the storm of blows
That rained upon the uplifted blade,
Which yet a vain resistance made.—
Amazed we pause : a female form
Rushed wildly in amid the strife,
Ere yet the glittering points that swarm
Around his breast could reach his life.
In the Duke's name she bade us stand,
As one accustomed to command ;
And then implored in piteous strain,
Till, wearied with entreaty vain,

Her head drooped on the stranger's breast,
Her pallid cheek his shoulder pressed.
One only course for us remained,—
How shall I speak the rest ?
The drawbridge passed,—the castle gained,
Within the court,—the torch's light
The damsel's rank betrayed,—
The form and features met our sight
Of Puglia's royal maid !”

XV.

The haughty Earl grew dark as night ;
His eyeballs, fraught with lurid light,
Like caverned fires began to glow,
Half hidden by his beetling brow.
A lengthened pause ensued : none spake,
Nor dared that silence drear to break,
Until in accents stern and deep
His voice was heard. As if from sleep,
All start and listen,—every word
Throughout the lofty hall was heard,

Although his accents were subdued,
While yet he struggled with his mood ;
His anger, curbed, but gathered force,
Like torrent thwarted in its course,
Which, mastering soon the slight defence,
Foams on with ruder violence.

XVI.

“ Lead hither this devoted pair,
Who meet to breathe the evening air,
And list to love’s romantic tale
Beneath the darkness’ friendly veil,
Ha ! is it so ? My blushing bride !
’Tis well,—thy lover at thy side !
Came I, then, hither to be made
A minion’s dupe,—to be betrayed,—
The jest of some ignoble hind—
Could ye no meaner subject find
Than Roger ? But, for this rash fool,
Who fain would make e’en me his tool,
The rack’s soft kiss shall soon efface
The attractions of a maiden’s face.”

XVII.

At that dark threat, the damsel clung
To her Goffredo's arm ; her tongue
Refused its office,—every sense
Seemed palsied by the influence
Of the fierce menace, which yet rung
In pitiless accents on her ear,
Chilling her very soul with fear.
But that which bade her spirit quail,
And blanched her cheek as marble pale,
But braced his nerves to that high tone
Had dared the fight 'gainst all alone :
He seized a weapon from the belt
Of him who stood before, and dealt
Such stroke, as had it reached its aim,
Had ended Roger's hopes of fame.
The hall, to death-like silence stilled,
Was now with sudden uproar filled:
A hundred falchions waved on high,
Gleaming in fearful rivalry ;

But had they played their deadly part,
Their points had reached him through her heart.
Long hung she, speechless, on his breast,
Until, by mighty love inspired,
By woman's self-devotion fired,
Her maiden-passion she confessed.
Then in her features you might trace
The spirit of her valiant race :
Her brow, as alabaster fair,
With intellectual beauty fraught,
The temple pure of lofty thought,
Wore a sublime and fearless air ;
While thus she pleaded in a tone,
Had melted aught save heart of stone :

XVIII.

" Strike then at me ! be my heart's blood
Poured forth to heal your deadly feud !
Ah ! trust me, it were better far
To die, than live in lone despair :
Know, too, the hour that seals his doom,
Consigns me to the welcome tomb !

Life were a blank where he is not ;
And here I swear, my earthly lot
Is cast with his ! Nay, more : to die—
To spend for him my latest sigh,
Were joy far greater than to live
Mid all the splendours thrones can give !
To thee, my sire, I fain would kneel,
Did not thy pitying eye reveal
All that a father's breast should feel—
In that I have deceived thee, deign
To hear the tale I do not feign :
How I have loved—and loved too well,
It needs not that I here should tell ;
But that love stole my heart, 'tis true,
Ere yet the theft I scarcely knew,—
And when 'twas known, 'twas known too late ;
To die for him was then my fate !
The fault be mine. Bid me atone
The crime, who am the guilty one ! ”

XIX.

Surely that voice had some deep charm,
Powerful to quell the wild alarm ;
Those silvery accents, low, yet clear,
Which for herself betrayed no fear,
Fell softly on the listening ear,
Like rain-drops on the summer sea,
When the sweet south blows balmily ;
And yet they had the power to fill
The lofty banquet-hall, and still
To transient calm the angry strife,
Which menaced her Goffredo's life.

XX.

The power of loveliness to melt
The heart, who has not owned and felt ?
But oh ! far brighter are its beams,
When the high soul of woman gleams
In forms the youthful poet dreams !
In Isolina's deep-blue eye
Beamed nobly forth that purpose high,—
That generous zeal which woman moves,
To venture all for him she loves.

E'en Roger's stern and reckless mood,
Inured to many a scene of blood,
Confessed the admiration due
To courage high, and love so true ;
But soon the fiend of jealous pride,
To haughty selfishness allied,
Arose within his wavering heart,
And bidding mercy thence depart,
Each better thought outweighed.
Still, when he viewed the damsel's tears,
As inwardly she prayed,
His softened heart perchance did feel
The artless force of her appeal ;
But soon its influence was o'er,
And pity's voice was heard no more !

XXI.

The Duke, who lost in stupor sate,
Now roused him, ere 'twas yet too late,
And spake, though tears were in his eye,
With semblance of authority ;

Though bootless 'twere to use the tone
Of one who dared to rule alone.
His palace filled with Roger's train,
He knew resistance were in vain ;
But Isolina's peril stirred,
And woke his slumbering energies,
And at the simple tale he heard,
He felt his Norman spirit rise ;
While, amid passion's angry storm,
He, with a father's boding eye,
Shuddered at that wild energy
Which shook her fragile form.
He saw that reason, nay e'en life,
Tottered amid the fearful strife :
" Kinsman ! " he cried, " thy hand withhold !
I would not it should ere be told
My peaceful hall were stain'd with blood,
Or made the scene of murderous feud.
And thou ! unworthy of my tears,
Who thus couldst crush the hopes of years,
On which thou knew'st my heart was plac'd,—
The hope to see thy temples grac'd

With fair Sicilia's diadem.—¹⁶
Thou wert my all, the precious gem,
How precious, words can never name !
On which my every thought was fixed ;
And thou, e'en thou ! for me hast mixed
This cup of bitterness and shame ! ”

XXII.

She bowed her head ; for filial love
Possessed a spell more deep to move,
For a brief space, her wavering breast,
E'en than the flame she had confessed.
Those words of mild reproach had power
Over her soul, in that dark hour,
Far mightier than stern Roger's threat :
Her pallid cheek with tears was wet,—
She thought of days long glided by,
Ere passion came, when all seemed bright,
Ere her heart knew love's witching light :
Distinct before her mental eye
Her long-lost mother's form arose,
With the sweet look of calm repose

That blessed her in her infancy.
The damsel knelt in silence there,
Her hands clasped o'er her bosom fair :
The banquet-hall, the lights, swam round,
She drooped and sunk upon the ground ;
Oblivion deep, though short, came o'er
Her troubled soul,—she knew no more !
While yet the counterfeit of death had power,
Her maidens bore her to her distant bower.

XXIII.

Half-maddened by the cruel sight,
Goffredo strove with desperate might :
Seizing an axe, he fought his way
On to the portal wide,
Through which the maid was borne away :
To follow her he all defied,
And long he held his foes at bay.
Had he but quailed one moment there,
Or shown one passing sign of fear,
His fate had been that instant sealed !
In vain with tears had he appealed

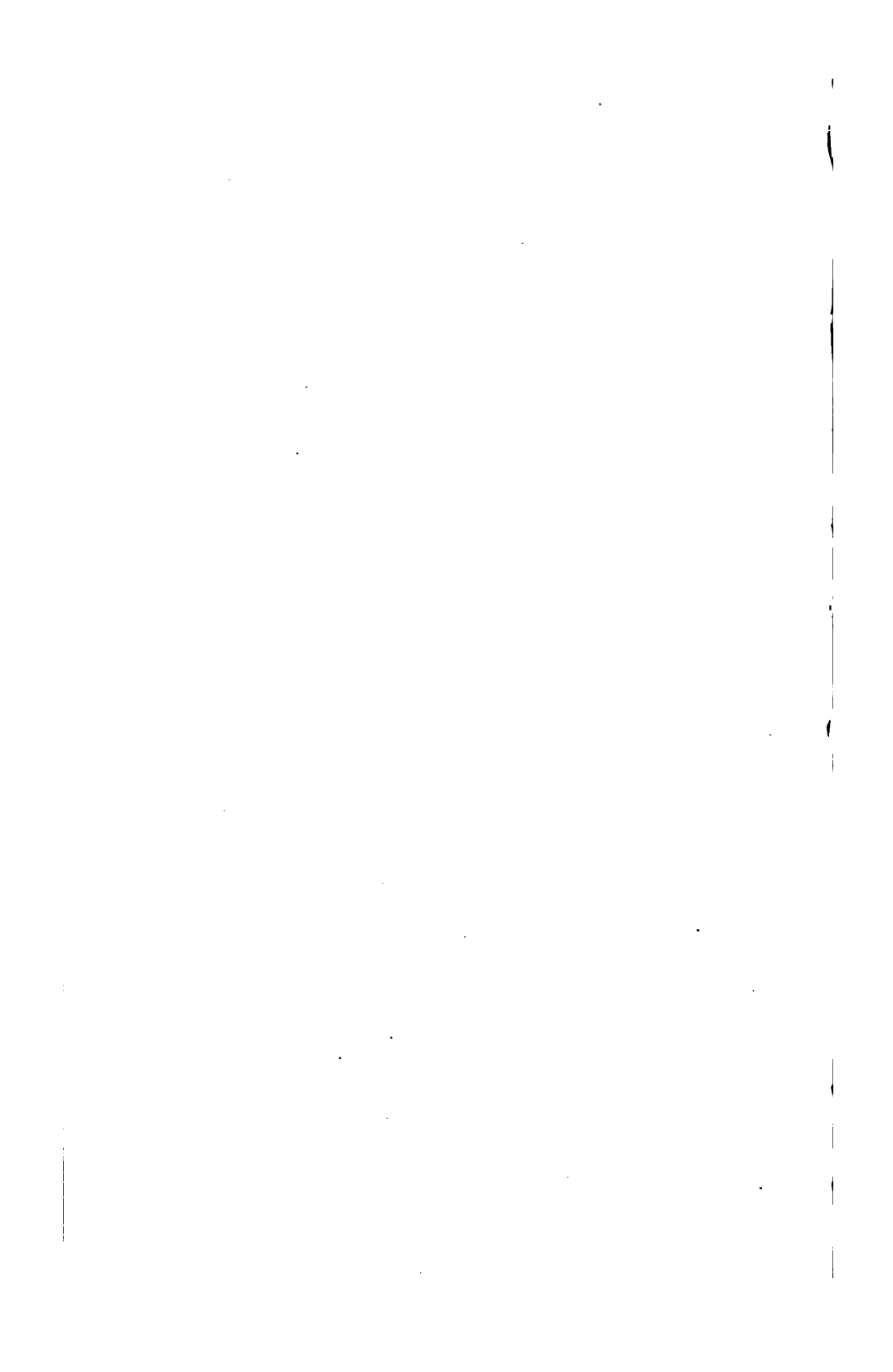
To the fierce Earl his life to spare ;
But he, whose stern, unyielding heart,
Steeled against anguish and despair,
Could see unmoved the life-drop start,
Admired the stranger's bearing bold,
And half-relenting, cried, " Hold, hold ! "
In single combat he would fain
Have tried his prowess once again.—
The Duke, who saw his wavering mood,
And adverse to the sight of blood, ·
A signal to the attendants gave,
While Roger undetermined stood,
Yet half inclined his life to save :
He bade them bear the youth away,
To dungeons where no cheerful ray
To pierce the gloomy vault had power,
And bless the captive's lonely hour.

END OF CANTO II.

THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO THIRD.

THE DUNGEON.



THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO THIRD.

THE DUNGEON.

I.

THE lights were fled, the banquet o'er,
And peace resumed her reign once more :
The storm, that erst so fiercely raged,
Was for an interval assuaged ;
Making the spectral silence seem
Like the transition of a dream.
The sentry's measured tramp alone,
Sounded upon the hollow stone,
As on he beat his dreary round,
Over the castle's fortified mound.

After the uproar loud and wild,
'Twas sweet to view the quiet sky,
The hills with fleecy vapours piled,
How shone the moon and stars on high,
In undisturbed tranquillity !
Without, all nature seemed at rest,
And all was calm save man's perturbed breast.

II.

When dark misfortune's tempest lours,
How slowly move the lingering hours !
Each weary day appears an age,
And life, a toilsome pilgrimage :
The future, like a stormy sky,
Lies shrouded in uncertainty,
More fearful than reality.
How wore Goffredo's lonely hours,
Within yon black and frowning towers ?
In weaving fancy's fairy chain,
Or counting happier days again ?
Ah, no ! the wretched seldom know,
E'en this brief solace midst their woe :

Save when sweet sleep, on balmy wings,
A short and deep oblivion brings,—
Sleep! who the care-worn often flies,
And to the gay and prosperous hies.
Within his dungeon, damp and low,
No glimmer brake to mock his woe:
He scarce could deem but that he slept;
But then his chains!—a shudder crept
Over his frame: had he but wept,
His tears had brought a sad relief,
To ease that leaden weight of grief.

III.

The bell tolled three: few hours ago,
He dreamt not of the fatal blow
Had fallen upon, and ground to dust,
The hopes in which he placed his trust,—
E'en in that transient space of time
Since last he heard the midnight chime.
It could not be—'twas sure a dream!
That night, beneath the moon's pale beam,—
That night—that *very* night had he,

Absorbed in love's sweet reverie,
Wandered with Isolina by the moonlit sea !

IV.

But hark ! what sound was that he heard ?
Aghast, he neither breathed nor stirred ;
He listened till his heart grew still,—
His cheek was pale,—his brow was chill ;
Mysterious murmurs filled his ear,
Like sound of mighty waters near :
Silence itself appeared to speak,
He staggered, as an infant weak.—
Again ! His ear deceived him not ;
He stood as one chained to the spot !
You might have bound him with a cord
Of frailest web, so rapt was he—
A pause ! within the rusty ward
Grated the unaccustomed key :
Another fearful pause ! the rack
Were better than such fierce suspense
As nigh o'erpowered his reeling sense.
At length he hears the bolt drawn back :

The strong-ribbed wicket slow unfolds,—
A mantled figure he beholds,
Bearing on high a silver lamp,
Whose light beamed faintly through the damp.

V.

With stealthy, noiseless step it trode :
What might such ghastly vision bode ?
Was it some deathly phantom come
To warn him of th' impending doom ?
Or worse, the tyrant's instrument
Of ill, on bloody errand sent ?
Seen by that dim, uncertain light,
Which glimmered palely through the night,
It took the form the fancy gave,
And might have scared the heart most brave.
It paused : the cowl then slowly raised,—
The light upon the features blazed.
What saw he there ! Could it be true ?
His Isolina's form he knew !
A cry escaped him : in wild haste
Her finger on his lip she placed ;

Then breathless stood, her head bent round,
As if in dread to hear some sound
Would bid her frame with horror thrill,
Until assured that all was still—
That wild, resistless feeling o'er,
She knew nor fear nor trembling more.
The lamp she placed upon the ground,
Then silently his chains unbound;
Her hand, though cold as stone, ne'er shook,
Pale was her cheek, but calm her look.

VI.

“Speak not: but let this mantle hide
Thy form within its foldings wide—
Thou mayst escape by this dim light,
And, thus disguised, elude the sight
Of the tired sentinel who keeps
The watch without. Ere dawnlight peeps,
Far from these walls thou must away,—
Here in thy place myself will stay:

Thou know'st no danger can befall
The daughter of Salerno's prince,
Within her father's hall.

Go !—Raimond will conduct thee hence,—
E'en now he waits without for thee,
In converse with the guard: 'twas he
Who led my doubtful steps this way,
To where the drowsy sentry lay,
Half slumbering on a bench of stone,
Beside the low-browed door, alone.
Though my poor heart with fear beat high,
I bade him ope the dungeon-gate
In accents of authority :
At first he seemed to hesitate,—
That interval how big with fate !
I knew, had he suspected aught,
A signal from his lips had brought
A swarm of minions to his aid,
And my last, dearest hope betrayed !
Ere he replied, the minstrel said,—

‘ I was a minister of Heaven,
On holy errand sped ;
To whom the solemn charge was given
To shrive the captive’s parting soul,
Ere yet, upon the gloomy morrow,
He left this world of sin and sorrow,
For one where kings have no control.’
Ne’er doubting Raimond’s tale, the guard
Then slow the ponderous gate unbarr’d—
But haste thee ! scanty time is ours,
Too swiftly speed the precious hours,—
Our only hope is in thy flight:
Thou must be gone ere morning’s light—
And, trust me, we shall meet again,
Unless a daughter’s tears be vain !
And should they fail, to some far shore
We’ll fly, to muse on perils o’er.
Think’st thou I dread the shadowy gloom,
The horrors of this living tomb ?
To me it were a bed of down,
A couch with fragrant roses strown.

In such a cause : to save thee, love !
Far greater trials would not move
My steadfast soul. Ere 'tis too late,
Ah ! speed thee to the castle gate :
Thy path with danger is beset,
But fortune will befriend us yet ;
And Raimond waits for thee without,
To guide thy dark and devious route.
Farewell ! farewell ! That Heaven may bless
Our enterprise with best success,
Oft will I pray when thou art gone,
And thus beguile the lingering moments on !”

VII.

In love and admiration lost,
Goffredo knelt and, speechless, gazed,
While stood the maid with eyes upraised,
Her hands upon her bosom crossed,
Like form of monumental stone,
All sense of outward objects gone ;
For at that moment every thought,
With holy trust in Heaven was fraught.

She scarcely seemed to breathe,—each sense
Was wrapped in deep and fervent prayer;
Yet thus her beauty shone most fair,
And filled the air with silent eloquence.

VIII.

Her pious duty paid, she bent
Her head, till her fair hair was blent
With the dark locks that clustered o'er

Her lover's manly brow.

She seemed to bless him, though no more
She spake; but raised her finger slow,
Enjoining silence with an air
So earnest, sad, he might not dare,
E'en for a moment, to dispute
The force of that persuasion mute.
He saw the colour come and go,
Over her cheek and breast of snow;

He feared lest, as a lute
Whose strings, attuned a tone too high,
When touched by autumn's withering sigh,

Break and are heard no more,
Her gentle heart might ne'er sustain
Aught added to the weight of pain
Which press'd upon her sore.
He felt all opposition vain,
Save to increase the mental strife
That fiercely warr'd against her life :
Then quick the mantle's folds he spread
Around his form and o'er his head,
And with reluctant step retired,
With wondering love and awe inspired.
Stooping his form, to counterfeit
The damsel's mien, and holding high
The lamp, he paus'd but to repeat
A parting " Benedicite."

IX.

He might not choose but to obey :
Raimond in silence led the way.
While hollow sounds the closed door,
Swiftly the intrepid pair passed o'er,

Amid the gloom with stealthy tread,
The vaulted passages which led
To the quadrangle's ample space.—
Onward they speed with rapid pace :
The echoing corridors prolong
Their footsteps, as they steal along.
What, if the guard should search the cell,
Ere ye have passed the castle-gate ?
Ah ! certain then would be your fate.
Good youth and minstrel speed ye well !
Or the next hour may ring your knell :
Right venturous is your path, I ween,
And girt with many a risk unseen.
On, on they glide through blackest night,—
May all good angels watch their flight !

X.

And now the spacious court they gain,
They breathe the pure, free air again :
Through the portcullis' ponderous bars
Gleam fitfully the paling stars ;

Before their path the drawbridge lies,—
The wakeful warder bids them stand,
And gives the signal to his band.
To him the minstrel prompt replies;
And at that point no mark of fear
In Raimond's bearing might be seen,—
His accents were as calm and clear,
As though there had no peril been;
And well 'twere so, for had he shown
One sign of faltering, hope were gone :
“ It was a Father from the shrine
Of holy Matthew sent,
To give a prisoner help divine
Of the blessed sacrament;
Whose duty, ere the morning's shine,
And his order's sacred discipline,
Recall'd him to his convent's cell,
In solitude his beads to tell,
And pass an hour in penance lone,
Ere the brief autumn-night were done.”

XI.

The warder uttered no reply,
But bowed with reverential air;
While the portcullis, reared on high,
Gave egress to the adventurous pair:
He doubted not the tale were true,
For Raimond's features well he knew.
With eager haste they leave the gate,—
Few perils more their course await.
And now the barbican is passed,
The outer wall is gained at last:
Under their path the waters gleam,
And sparkle in the moon's pale beam;
Swift down the rocky steep they hie,—
Beneath they see the city lie,
Slumbering in calm tranquillity.
Goffredo, midst that scene so fair,
Inhales with joy the elastic air,
Made sweeter still by liberty.

And now the water's brink they reach ;
They pause secure upon the beach,
Sheltered beneath a sea-worn rock,
That long had braved the billow's shock.
After the damp and noisome cave,
How pure the breezes from the wave,
Which wafting coolness, freshly blow
Over Goffredo's throbbing brow !
And, for a moment, all seemed joy,
And happiness without alloy ;
Until a sudden thought came o'er him,—
The maiden's form lay pale before him,
Immured within that dungeon drear,
When none her dying groans could hear !
Such harrowing vision froze his blood,
Big drops upon his forehead stood :
His eyes grew dim,—his brain swam round,
He would have fallen to the ground,
But that the bard, who saw his mood,
And guessed what thought his soul subdued,
Supported him, till thus he spoke,
As one who from a trance awoke :—

XII.

“ Let me return, ere 'tis too late,—
Perchance e'en now the stroke of fate
Hangs o'er her head. Father! I see,
Methinks, the maid for whom I live,—
For whom, e'en life 'twere joy to give,

Alone in her extremity,—
Stretched in yon dark and noisome cave,
Destined, perhaps, to be her grave!
Ah! what if Roger's cruel doom
Designed for me a living tomb!
The thought is death—”

“ Thou ravest! hear,—
For every minute now is dear.
I know the conflict of thy mind,
Which fears for her we left behind,
Who dares, for one she loves so well,
The darkness of that gloomy cell.
Then let her peril brace each nerve,
Nor let thy resolution swerve,

And, in this trying moment, prove
Thee worthy such devoted love.
This weakness ill becometh thee,
Heir of a noble destiny !
A glorious cause—thine own success,
Thy every hope of happiness,
Demand thy loftiest energy,—
Ere long, a throne is lost and won !
Know, then, thou art the rightful heir
Of these broad realms, and city fair !
No longer thou the minstrel's son,
But grandson of that valiant knight,
Who won the field in many a fight,
Boemondo ! Guiscard's eldest born—
My tale is long : e'en now the morn
Melts faintly o'er the mountain's steep ;
Ere many moments more be past,
I must embark on yonder deep,
While yet night's favouring shadows last.
This scroll the mystery will unfold—
Take it—and bear this ring of gold

Unto the noble Mario's hands.
All that remains yet to be told,
He will explain: our cause demands
That seven good miles I should away
Across the main, ere break of day,—
But think how much depends on thee!
If thou art true, I pledge my word
That, with the aid of this good sword,
The maiden shall again be free!
Nay more—before St. Matthew's shrine,
The holy church shall make her thine!
But shouldst thou falter in the course
Which lies before thee, all is lost!
Ah! then what pangs of late remorse
Will wring thy breast, that thou hast crossed
With love-sick fears our purpose high,
And rendered vain a noble scheme,
Whose lofty aim is to redeem
This land from Roger's tyranny!
Think that thy love,—thy hopes of fame—
The glory of thy grandsire's name,

Demand that thou be prompt and bold !
Farewell !—Sér Mario will unfold,
Ere long, the path thou shouldst pursue.
Again, farewell !—Be firm and true !”

XIII.

With looks of doubt and wonder blent,
Goffredo took the ring and scroll ;
And for a time astonishment,
Mingled with awe, o’erpowered his soul.
Awhile he mused : the bard was gone,—
He stood upon the beach alone :
No sound came o’er his listening ear,
Save of the wave that rippled near,
And broke in foam upon the shore—
The minstrel’s form he saw no more !
Almost the wondering youth did deem,
That all he heard was but a dream :
He gazed around—the city lay
Buried in calm and deep repose ;
He saw where o’er the tranquil bay,
The mists of morning slowly rose ;

The castle darkly frowned on high,
In strong relief against the sky;
The waning stars were dimmed and pale,
He felt the pure and freshening gale,
Which heralded the coming day,
Around his throbbing temples play;
He saw the minstrel's ring of gold
Beneath the pale light faintly gleam,—
What he had heard was, then, no dream!
He grasped the scroll, which should unfold
The mystery of his birth. No more
He hesitated,—doubt was o'er!
The minstrel's promise filled his ear—
“The maiden shall again be free!”
Full many a time that promise dear
His bosom echoed inwardly:
Soon passed away the phantoms dread,
Which late had scared his harassed breast;
Like wandering spirits, charmed to rest
By exorciser's art, they fled:
And love alone his heart inspired,
For sanguine youth all soon is fired

With hopes that smile but to deceive,
Bidding us all we wish, believe !
In such fond interval, how vain
The sad experience of the past,
Which warns that, in this world of pain,
How brief a space such dreams may last,—
How soon, to chase our visions high,
Comes hard and stern reality !
In youth, in golden youth alone,
Ere the heart's joyous spring is gone,
Do we possess the magic power
To cheat misfortune's dreary hour.
Breathe but a hope, and we are free,
And happy in youth's buoyancy ;
One fleeting ray of fortune's smile
Can hoarded thoughts of ill beguile :
What reck we of the storms of fate,
The perils which our path await ?
Content to seize the present hour,
We think not long what distant tempests lour.

XIV.

Oh, early love! with hope entwined,
When thou dost rule the captive mind,
On all thou pour'st thy purple light,
Shedding on life a halo bright,
Which makes the winged moments seem
But as some brief and happy dream!
And when that fairy dream is o'er,
And we are young and blithe no more,
Ah! e'en the very sighs and tears
That came with thee in days gone by,
After the gloomy lapse of years,
Are precious to the memory!

XV.

That feeling which so fresh, so true,
O'er our young days enchantment threw,
Too soon is doomed to fade away:
And all too soon life's bloom is gone—
Its flowers decayed—its odour flown;
And then the past alone seems gay,

Like glimpses of the clear-blue sky,
Seen faintly through the clouds that fly
O'er heaven, in autumn's changeful day.
Though all to us seem dark and dreary
As on we journey, lone and weary,
The world a gloomy vale of tears,
With nought our sympathy to claim,
Yet Nature still remains the same,
Unaltered by the lapse of years;
The earth, the waters, and the skies
Still smile, our onward path to bless,
In undiminished loveliness—
Within ourselves the difference lies;
Our faded hearts can prize no more,
The things we loved in days of yore!

XVI.

With noiseless step Goffredo hied
Along each darkened avenue
That best might hide his form from view,
Until he saw where, in its pride,

Ser Mario's fortress-palace rose,
With tower and vantage-coigne supplied,
Showing him or with friends or foes
Alike prepared to deal.

Goffredo knocked against the gate,
Strengthened with many an iron plate,
And armed with spikes of steel:
No voice replied.—He struck anew:
The hollow tones re-echoed through
The silent and deserted street;
Yet still no welcome footsteps greet
His listening ear. What, if the guard,
Patrolling on their nightly beat,
Should pass that way! Almost the youth
Again did question Raimond's truth;
When, from a casement strongly barred,
Which grimly flanked the castle gate,
Issued a voice so cracked and hard,
As caused a thrill of fear and hate

Within the listener's breast:
So strange and wildly sounded forth
Those tones, that scarcely seemed of earth,

The youth himself from peril blessed.

“ At this lone hour, what seek ye here ?

Begone, intruder, hence ! or fear

My master’s vengeance ! ”—

“ List, I pray,

Or the night-watch will pass this way,

While yet my mission is undone—

Goffredo is my name: I bring

From Raimond to your lord this ring,

Which I may yield to him alone.

But haste ! e’en now I hear advance

The night-patrol,—aroused, perchance,

By the unwonted sounds——”

“ No more :

Enter,—thou art expected here.”

When to the youth all hope seemed o’er,

For the night-guard approached so near,

’Twixt them and him there only lay

Ten footsteps of the narrow way,

He heard a low and hissing sound :

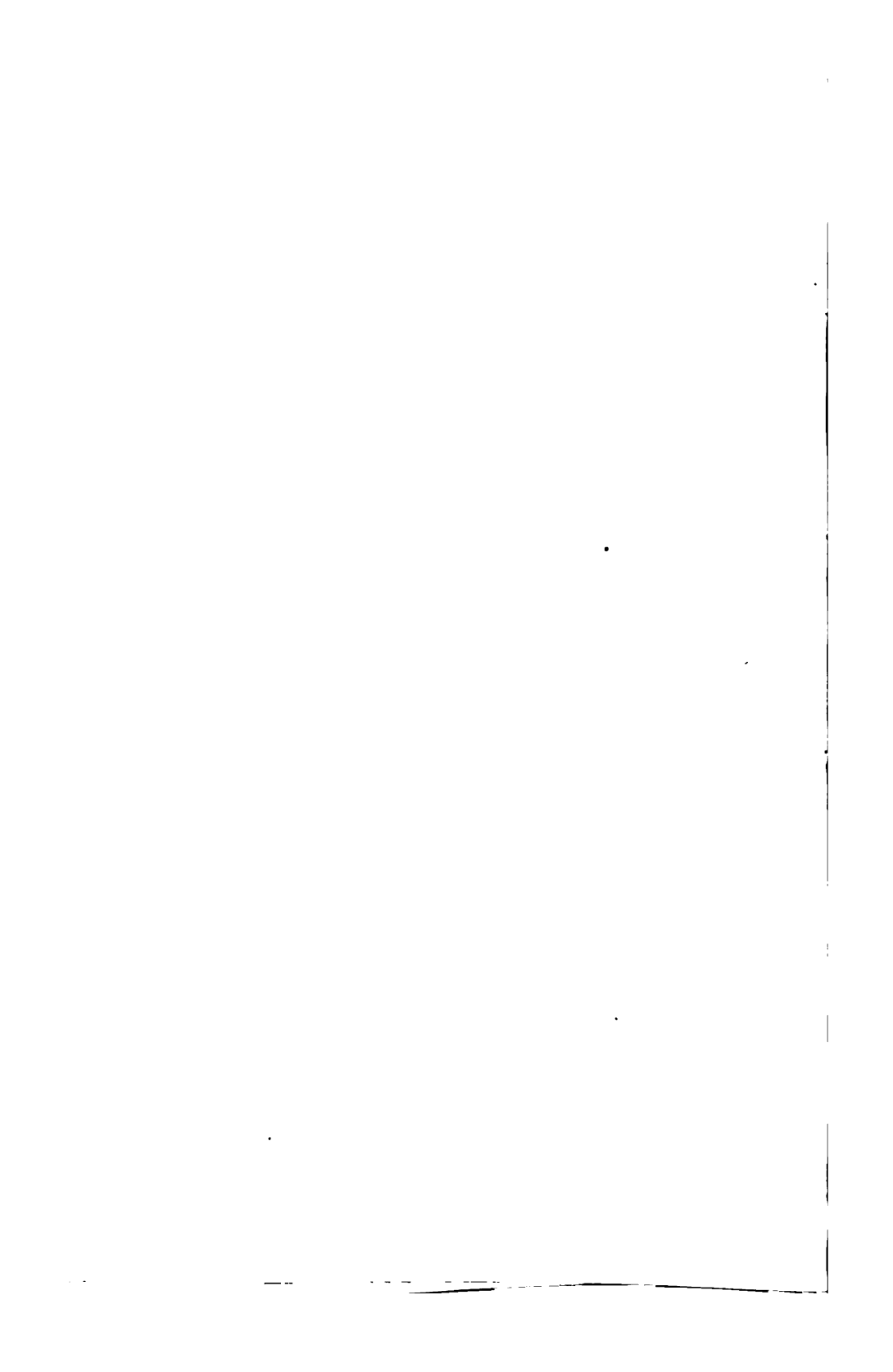
Lost in amaze, he looked around,

And saw, where in the rugged wall
An opening yawned ; yet still so small,
To pass there scarce was ample room.
He entered ; but within, the gloom
His eye long sought to pierce in vain—
He heard the opening close again
With the same strange, mysterious sound ;
And then a voice, as from the ground,
Bade him proceed—At length his sight,
Accustomed to the uncertain light
Which reigned within that mansion drear,
Beheld whence came those sounds of fear :
He saw a dwarf of aspect grim,
Of giant head, and puny limb,
And stature scarcely four feet high.
Crossing himself, he inly said,
While after him he swiftly sped,
That ne'er till now had met his eye
Such strange and wild deformity !

XVII.

The dwarf in silence hurried on
Through suites of chambers dark and lone,
And sounding galleries arched with stone,
Until they reached a vaulted room,
Where one lamp glimmered through the gloom,
Shedding a dim and pallid ray,
Made paler by the coming day :
There, deep in consultation, sate
Twelve men of aspect stern and high,
Whose care-worn cheek, and haggard eye,
Told of prolonged and grave debate.

END OF CANTO III.

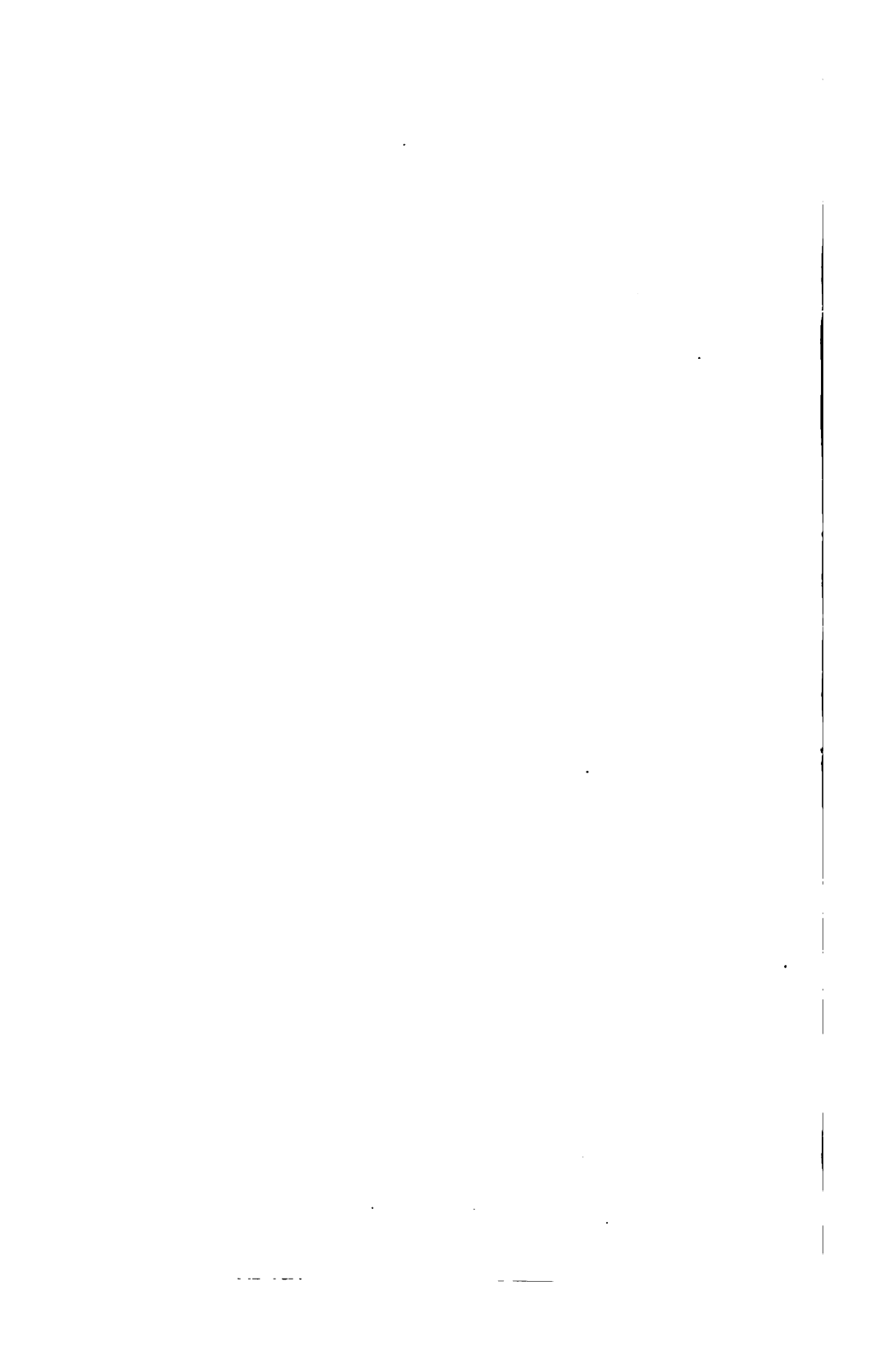


THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO FOURTH.



AMALFI.



THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO FOURTH.

A M A L F I .

I.

BRIGHTLY o'er Salerno's bay,
Begirt with glory, springs the day;
Heaven's arch o'erspanns the heaving flood,
And dies the vapours light that brood
And curl upon the waters blue,
With colours of celestial hue;
Like fancy's dreams when life was new,
As brilliant, but as fleeting too!

The birds, as high in air they rise,
Warble their joyous melodies
To greet the coming of the sun,
Ere yet the day be well begun.
So gaily dawns the festal morn,
As if it mocked no breasts forlorn,—
As if there were no scenes of woe,
No bleeding, breaking hearts below!

II.

As night began to melt away
O'er the wide bosom of the bay,
A bark approached the craggy shore,
Where Amalfi's mountains tower
Above the restless deep :
Freshly she cuts her liquid way,
Dashing on high the salt-sea spray,
As on she nears the steep.
Amalfi's walls now plainer grow,
Touched by the sunshine's earliest glow,
Though yet the darkened sea beneath
Is hid in morning's misty wreath.

Above, each tower and palace gleams,
Steeped in a shower of orient beams ;
No cloudy vapours linger there,
To mar that scene so wondrous fair :
The city smiles in sunshine's glow,
Though all be hid in mist below ;
And in clear air her structures rise,
As if to pierce their own blue skies.
A goodly sight was it, I ween,
Thus in the early dawning seen ;
Like an enchanted city, based
On clouds in eddying circles driven,
With pinnacles by genii traced,
And glittering domes that soar to heaven !

III.

What form is that within the bark
Enveloped in a mantle dark,—
A harp upon the shoulder borne,
A chaplet on the temples worn ?
'Tis Raimond of the minstrel-band,
Who thus approached Amalfi's strand !

To all—the coldest—such a scene
A spring of pure delight had been,
Viewed by the spiritual light
Of early morn, ere day grew bright,
While dawnlight purpled through the air,
And mantled o'er that city fair;
But witnessed by the poet's eye,
It waked a thrill of ecstasy!
He struck his harp,—for midst his cares,
The sympathy which genius shares
With lovely things, assuaged his grief,
Brought to his weary breast relief,
And bade him, spite his many woes,
In Nature's presence find repose:
And thus he poured his simple lay,
Charming his lonely grief away,
While yet in airy distance rose
Amalfi's variegated steep,
Her walls, and strong-embattled keep;
Where, seated midst her fairy bowers,
She wears her diadem of towers.

IV.

“ Amalfi ! sovereign of the sea, ¹⁷
How welcome is thy sight to me !
Thou city of the azure deep,
That rulest o’er the mountain-steep,
Whose regal edifices rise
In towering grandeur to the skies !
In nature’s charms arrayed of yore,
Thou smilest lovely as before :
And thou wert known in the sweet time,
When life was in its vernal prime ;
Oft have I seen, in days gone by—
The days that flew so merrily,
Thy lofty dwellings glimmer bright
Thus in the misty morning’s light,
While yet the deep seemed wrapped in night ! ”

“ Twenty long years have passed away—
Still it seems but yesterday !
Since I sailed across the sea
That girdles beauteous Italy :

Again the well-known sounds I hear,
Which then struck on my youthful ear ;
The murmuring waves, the flapping sail,
The sea-mew's cry, the pilot's hail,
The music of the freshening gale—
A thousand thoughts of times by-gone,
And long-lost memories, one by one,
Of things which have been, slow arise,
And bring past scenes before mine eyes ;
Recalling to my breast forlorn,
The freshness of life's early morn ! ”

“ The sight of each familiar spot,
Though long-forsaken, ne'er forgot,
Calls forth a spring within my breast,
Whose gushings long have been repressed ;
Like fountains which in caverns linger,
Chilled by winter's icy finger,
Until the genial breath of spring,
Awakes their plaintive murmuring.

How many a year hath hurried on,
How many a friendship past and gone,
Since last I wandered careless here,
When life was new, and hope still dear:
Ere friends, who loved in vain, were gone,—
Ere yet the spirit's joy was flown,
And I was doomed to weep alone!"

V.

Meantime the bark, with swelling sail,
Rides fleetly on before the gale,
Till, past the lofty pharos driven—
The challenge spoke—the pass-word given—
They sail within the crowded port,
In those far times the chief resort
Of all the commerce of the world;
Where might be seen, on high unfurled,
The flags of many a distant land,
Whose vessels touched Amalfi's strand.
What Venice was in after time,
Was this fair city in her prime;

Though now abandoned and forgot,
A ruined, half-deserted spot,
With nothing left of all her power,
Save matchless beauty, Nature's dower.
Where are her "royal merchants" now,¹⁸
The chosen rulers of the state?¹⁹
Whose wisdom made her rich and great,
And caused her haughty foe to bow,²⁰
And own *her* mistress of the waves,
Whose sons are now a despot's slaves?
Their dwellings crumble in the dust,
And e'en their country's lofty name
Is from the rank of nations thrust,
Whose glory filled the trump of fame,—
Who gave the world of commerce laws,
And fought in Freedom's sacred cause.
Her harbour, once a busy scene,
Instinct with life from morn to even,
And ever filled with stately ships
From distant countries of the globe,
From where the sun in ocean dips,
Or dons at morn his eastern robe,

Is now a shapeless, sandy heap,
Its bulwarks buried in the deep.
Quenched are the city's glories now,
Her towers lie mouldering on her brow;
Yet there, mid ruin and decay,
Nature still wears her brightest dress,
Still reigns serene in loveliness,
Though pomp and power have passed away.

VI.

Count Manso's palace hath an air
Which seems to say no joy is there,
Though lofty be that structure fair,
And graced with aught that early art
Of rich or stately could impart.
Round sculptured columns rudely twine
Wild weeds and creeping eglantine;
And vines, that once to trellis clung,
And to the sun their clusters hung,
Now stray in rank luxuriance o'er
Th' untrodden terrace' marble floor.

No crowds of menials at the gate
Bespeak the master's palmy state,
Though noblest of that wealthy land,
And first who in her councils sate,
And office held of high command,
Was Manso. In Amalfi's cause
He fain would stifle hidden grief,
And in administering her laws,
From bitter thoughts obtained relief ;
But oft at midnight's silent hour
Stern memory would assert her power,
And bid his wandering fancy dwell
On all he lost, and loved so well ;
For now a blighted man was he,
And lonely in his misery.
Long years had vanished since he loved,
Or kindred ties his bosom moved :
His heart-strings, rudely torn away
From all they cherished in the day
When young, confiding love was strong,
Ere cold mistrust could image wrong,

E'en as the tendrils of the vine,
That round the neighbouring olive twine,
When from the branches stripped and wrung,
To which their youthful vigour clung,
They drooped and withered. Oft again
He sought to bind them,—but in vain:
Their strength was gone, their spirit fled,
And the bruised heart in silence bled.

VII.

And see! within that darkened room
One taper twinkles through the gloom;
The casements, closed, admit no light,
Though morning now was clear and bright.
That night in vain he courted sleep,
Yet sits he in abstraction deep;
He thought upon his house decayed,
His dearest hopes in ruins laid—
The public loss—his country's wane,—
He shrunk beneath the load of pain.
No marvel, then, he had not slept;
But often had the mourner wept

Such tears as gently drop like balm,
And bring the wounded bosom calm.

VIII.

While thus he mused upon his fate,
Loud knocking shook the lofty gate :
He heard it not—his thoughts were fixed
On far-gone times, ere sorrow mixed
Within his cup the bitter draught,
Which to the very dregs he quaffed.
A lengthened pause ensued. Still he
Sate buried in his reverie :
He might have slept, so rapt in thought,
So dead was he to all around ;
His fixed eye no object sought,
His ear seemed closed to every sound.

IX.

Who in that chamber dares intrude ?
His servants knew his wonted mood ;
They guessed he darkly brooded o'er
Some harrowing thought,—but knew no more

Than that, apart from public gaze,
He wore away his sadden'd days,
Save when his country's weal required
His ready aid, and bade him rise :
For that high cause alone inspired,
And wak'd his slumbering energies.

X.

The opened casement poured a stream
Of light, that broke his mournful dream.
Half blinded with the sudden blaze
Of orient beams, his baffled gaze,
Enfeebled by the recent gloom,
Wandered around the sunlit room,
Until two forms he slowly traced.
His ancient follower, Mark, was there ;
The other—could it be ? In haste
He rose : with wild, bewildered air
Long peered he in the minstrel's face,
As if he sought therein to trace
Some feature, which had left behind
Its image, stamped upon his mind.

His brother long was counted dead,—
Were his the lineaments he read ?
It could not be : perchance his sight
Was dazzled with the glare of light—
And then the minstrel-garb he wore,
His laurel-wreath,—the harp he bore !
A Manso ne'er so low could stoop
As join the trouvère's ribald troop,
Forgetful of his country's claim,
His honour, and his father's name !
“ Who art thou ? Say, what mak'st thou here ?
Thou seem'st as one I once held dear,
Who, though he broke a brother's faith,
Had won forgiveness in his death !

XI.

Oft times the bard essayed to speak,—
Oft died his voice in accents weak ;
Like one who strives his soul to nerve,
To work some desperate deed of fear,
Yet fain would from his purpose swerve
When the dread hour approaches near.

At length, with mighty effort, he
Gained o'er himself the mastery ;
With faltering tone, and cheek all pale,
He thus poured forth his guilty tale :—

XII.

Raimond's Tale.

“ Behold thy brother ! I am he
Who broke his faith to Heaven and thee ;
But who has wept with many a tear
The woes he brought on one so dear !
Ere I continue, I would ask—
Nay, would implore that thou wouldst task
Thy firm endurance, whilst my tale
Of sin and sorrow I unfold ;
For it will bid thy bosom quail,
And make thy heart's best blood run cold !
Scant time is given me to reveal
The guilt I yet would fain conceal.
Thou hast a son,—Clotilda's child—
Nay, thou must calm this transport wild !

Hear me!—E'en now the sun is high,
Too swift the precious moments fly;—
And, trust me, we have utmost need
Of stern resolve—unerring speed!

XIII.

“Thou know'st I was a wayward boy,—
My father's bane, my mother's joy.
In idle sports my youth flew by,
In feasting, song, and revelry:
I quitted studies hard and dry,
Lured by the charms of minstrelsy,—
For my fond mother deemed my mind
Too subtly great to be confined.
So passed the days that ne'er return,
In idleness and unconcern;
As if the present were the last,
And we should ne'er review the past!

XIV.

“Marini's son—nay, pause and hear!
Vied with me in my wild career.

Thou knew'st him : in a midnight brawl
We quarrelled—fought—I saw him fall :
He was the Prince's favourite son,—

My certain doom was death.
I fled : and ere the morning shone,
Within Salerno's walls alone,

Secure I drew my breath.
In this disguise I wandered there,—
A bard is welcome every where :
None knew me for a Manso's son,—
My downward course was now begun,
The minstrel Raimond I became !

Soon on my fall I learnt to look
Without a blush : my noble name
I bartered for a minstrel's fame ;
I learnt to glory in my shame,

My country I forsook.
Like pebble rolling down a hill,
Which near the end rolls faster still,
Each day in vice I plunged more deep :
I deemed excess would lull to sleep

The voice of conscience in my breast ;
And, while it lasted, I *had* rest.
Yet still the memory of my race
Such courses could not all efface ;
And oft I sighed alone, unseen,
Thinking on what I might have been.
Now steel thy breast to hear my tale,
Nor let thy resolution fail ;
I would repair the outrage done,
And give thee back thy long-lost son.
But thou must hear me,—calmly hear,
Of that which will thy heart-strings tear !

XV.

“ Boemondo, Guiscard’s eldest born,
The bravest knight whose deeds adorn
The rolls of chivalry,
With ardour loved the science gay,
A votary of the minstrel’s lay,
Of music and of poesy :
By him distinguished and preferred,
I soared above the tuneful herd.

Full oft I bore away the prize,
Hallowed by drops from lovely eyes ;
Until, with martial ardour fired,
By brave Boemondo's fame inspired,
I followed him to Palestine,
A soldier in the cause divine.
And I had learnt, few days before,
My sainted mother was no more ;
That, heart-struck, she had drooped and pined
For me, the worthless and unkind.
My guilty conscience smote me sore ;—
But to have seen her face once more,
Who had been slighted and passed o'er,
A hundred deaths would I have died !
'Tis thus, when ours we oft despise
The thing, which lost, we dearly prize.
For home and friends again I sighed,
Yet deemed I might no more return
To those whom I had caused to mourn :
'Twas then I joined Boemondo's band,
And sailed with him for Syria's strand.

XVI.

“ I followed him to Antioch. There
I first beheld the peerless fair,
Whose beauty shone without compare—
Clotilda! She was like a flower
That blooms in some secluded bower,
Though decked in nature’s rarest dress,
Unconscious of its loveliness!
Oh! she was as a thing of light,
Within whose influence all seemed bright:
Her joyous life was like a tone
Of music, scarcely heard, when gone,—
For soon the fell destroyer came,
And changed her smiles to tears of shame.
Suffice to say I loved,—how well—
How madly, words can never tell!
All drear and dark appeared the past,
But now the winged hours flew fast;
So swiftly, life was as a dream,
While hurried thus down passion’s stream,

I bowed to love's resistless power,
And bade his witchery charm each hour.

XVII.

" She was Boemondo's eldest born,
The joy and solace of his home;
Yet fitted were she to adorn
The loftiest throne of Christendom !
As war relax'd, his court became
Resort of all the Knights of name,
Of Europe's Christian chivalry;
And many a warrior's heart beat high
When bards would sing, by her inspired,
Whose fame each knightly bosom fired.

XVIII.

" Though, when I joined the sacred cause,
I cast aside the minstrel's gown,
Yet still my music gained applause,
And oft I won the laurel crown :
The Prince approved my strains so well,
He bade me in his palace dwell,

That I might to his child impart
The mysteries of the tuneful art.
Clotilda's master I became,
And thus, in secret, fed my flame ;
Intoxicated with the draught,
Fresh streams of love I daily quaffed.
'Tis thus that Fortune lends her aid,
When the first, fatal step is made,
To tempt to wrong, and hurry on
The guilty, till all hope be gone,—
Till, lost in passion's maddening race,
It is too late our path to trace
Back to the point from whence we fell—
You might arrest the ocean-tide as well!

XIX.

“ She knew I was of noble strain,
Yet still I sought her heart in vain ;
Her spirit was too bright for mine,—
Too lofty in its purity :
I might have striven to undermine
For aye, with passion's subtlety,

That holy chastity of thought,
Which made her virgin breast its shrine,
And still all vainly had I sought
To dim her spirit's flame divine.
Though oftentimes tears would fill her eye,
To hear some tale of hapless love
Sung to a plaintive melody,
Yet had I only power to move
Her soul with unreal misery ;
I had no deeper influence,
 I dared not breathe my love,—
So strong in conscious innocence,
 So guileless, pure, was she !
But to my tale,—time wears apace :
List yet a moment, whilst I trace
The sad events that followed fast,
Until the fatal gulph was passed ;
And I brought ruin, and despair,
And death, to one so young and fair.

XX.

“ From Antioch, Prince Boemondo sent
To the whole Christian armament,
Encamped by Jordan’s sacred flood,
(Still red with unbelievers’ blood,)
A herald, to proclaim that he
Would hold a solemn tournament,
To celebrate a victory
In which the Saracens were quelled.
Full many a knight to Antioch came,
Inspired by fair Clotilda’s fame :
’Twas then, perchance, I first beheld,
Blazoned amid the tents that lay
Without the walls, in long array,
 The ensigns of our name ;
The sight awoke a dreamy train
Of feelings of my boyhood’s day,
I never thought to know again,—
 Too soon they passed away !
My soul with passion was engrossed,
The memory of my country lost.

XXI.

“ A stranger entered in the lists,
Who vanquished all antagonists ;
To whom the general voice decreed,
From fair Clotilda's hands, the meed
 To knightly prowess due :
For she was Beauty's loveliest queen,—
All said a fairer ne'er was seen,
Than him a knight more true ;
He knelt him to receive the prize,
His visor raised,—what met my eyes ?
My very heart within me leapt,
A dark foreboding o'er me crept,—
 My brother's form I knew !
It was thyself ! Why tell the rest ?
Too soon I knew that thou wert blessed,—
That thou hadst won the heart, that I
Had died a thousand deaths to gain !
How shall I paint the agony—
The harrowing thoughts that racked my brain !

Each day appear'd an age of pain :—
Like one in utter darkness left
Was I, of the sole hope bereft,
Which late, though faintly, beam'd upon
My life, and might have led me on
To better things,—all seem'd a dream !
The future loured without a gleam
To light my black despair !
Where now were flown the visions fair,
Which fed my love with hopes like air ?
All, all were gone, and I was left to brood
Over my fancied wrongs in solitude !

XXII.

“ At length the fatal day arrived
Which made her thine,—and I survived
The torture of that hour !
Nay, more ; to celebrate the rite,
The monarch bade me that same night
Invoke my minstrel power !
I brav'd it all : I saw her wed,—
I helped to strew thy marriage-bed :

Chief of the minstrel-troop, 'twas I
Swelled high the song of jubilee;
I was delirious with despair,—
I laugh'd and sang, the gayest there!
E'en now my soul recoils with dread,
Though since that day long years have fled,
At thought of pangs I then endured,
The sorrows time hath never cured!

XXIII.

“The first fierce transports o'er, a calm
Came o'er my breast, but brought no balm;
And then revenge engross'd my soul!
I had ne'er practised to control
The passions, which, like winds that sweep
Over the bosom of the deep,
Gather fresh fury in their flight,
Till nothing may resist their might.
'Twas I who laid the fatal train,—
I, whom no gratitude could bind,
Poisoned with doubt thy generous mind—
I, who have ever proved the bane,

The curse, of all the true and kind !
My heart with fierce revenge was filled,
My better feelings all were chilled :
Blinded by passion's torrent-force,
Remorse ne'er checked my headlong course ;
My dreams of happiness—my all
Of good—were based upon the rock
I'd seen in ruins round me fall :
My reason trembled with the shock—
From maddening thoughts was no release,—
But why repeat the cruel arts
With which I undermin'd the peace
Of two devoted, noble hearts ;
Or dwell upon the bitter wrong
I brought upon so dear a head !
My tale, e'en now, is over long.
Ere scarce one year was past, you fled,
With firm belief the tale was true,
That she, who only breathed for you,
With guilty flame preferred another,
And he,—your false and cruel brother !

But yet her anguish could not move
My heart, until she died to prove
Her matchless constancy and love.
Oh, then what torments wrung my breast !
By night—by day—I knew no rest :
Lost in bewildering thoughts, I gazed
Upon the ruin I had made ;
Like to a wizard, half afraid
To view the phantom shapes himself hath raised.

XXIV.

“ To think that *I* should be the cause
Of death to *her* !—Oh, what a strife
Arose within,—my heart’s blood froze !
I saw her, late so full of life,
And loveliness, and youth, and hope,
Beneath the ruthless tyrant droop,
And prematurely fade away ;
Like a bruised flowret, trampled on,
And withered, ere its little day
Of life and fragrance half were done.

Was all this ghastly ruin wrought
By me? It was a fearful thought,
Which into madness wound my brain,—
And long I lay, all dead to pain ;
Would I had never waked again,
And death oblivion brought !

XXV.

“ At Sidon, on the Syrian strand,
She died, far from her native land ;
But not till she had given birth,
In sorrow, to an infant fair.
No notes of welcome, or of mirth,
Greeted the hapless stranger there ;
Though desolation stalked around,
He smiled into his mother's face,
Unconscious of the wreck he found.
That smile was powerful to efface
The anguish of her widowed grief,
And, for a time, hope brought relief.

But 'twas too late : the blow was dealt,
She knew that she was doomed to die ;
Often on gentle heads how fiercely pelt
The bitter storms of dark adversity !

XXVI.

“ And now to leave this only treasure,
This new-discovered fount of pleasure ;
To leave her helpless babe forlorn,—
From *all* she loved, and leaned on, torn !
Such thoughts did but accelerate
The sure, though lingering stroke of fate—
And here, before high Heaven, I swear,
She was as pure as she was fair ;
As spotless as the virgin snow,
That drifts upon the mountain's brow !
Her spirit was too bright and holy,
For this dark world of sin and folly :
She ne'er complained, but only sighed
Over her ruined hopes,—and died !

. And at the last, assured by faith,
Was calm and steadfast, even in death,
Bowing before the will of Heaven,
To which her every thought was given ! ”

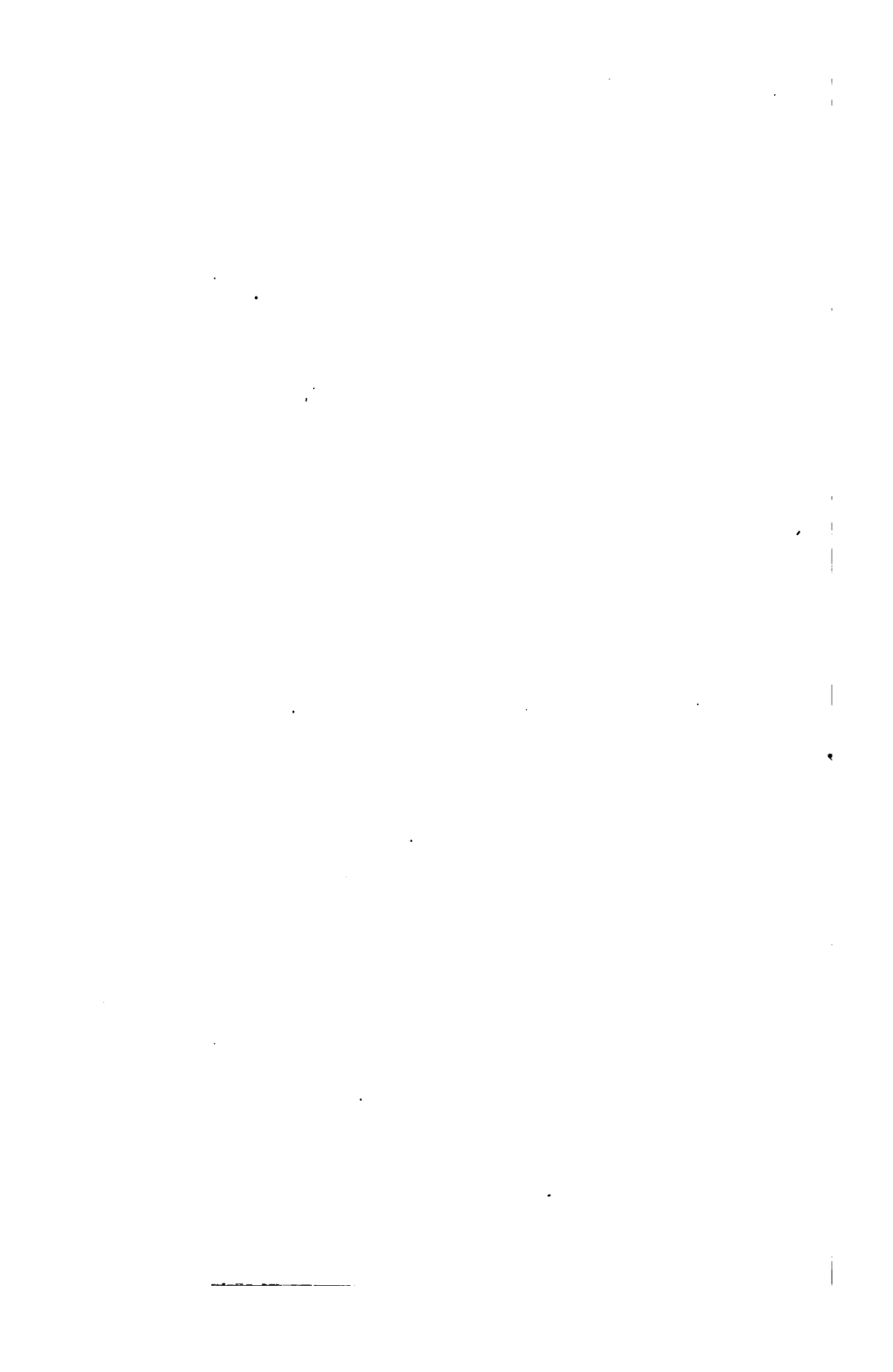
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END OF CANTO IV.

THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE CONSPIRACY.



THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE CONSPIRACY.

I.

“LONG lay I dead to all around,
My senses in oblivion drown'd—
The days that passed I might not number,
While buried in that dreamless slumber;
But when I woke to life and woe,
And deemed that nought was left below
Save dark remorse and misery,
Clotilda's infant smiled on me
With the appealing look of infancy:
I felt myself not all bereft,
That something precious yet was left,—

One object upon which to pour,
The lonely heart's neglected store ;
And he was all remained to me
Of her I loved so fervently !
Still I resolved my tale of guilt,
And all the crumbling fabric built
By selfishness, and treachery,
Should one day be revealed to thee.

II.

" I landed at Amalfi. There
(None knew me in my minstrel-dress)
I learnt that thou, in mute despair,
A prey to hopeless wretchedness,
Wert in thy palace close immured,
Where strangers entrance ne'er procured.
I then withdrew, to wait the hour
When time had softened memory's power ;
Vowing that I would *then* repair,
In part, the injury done,—declare
Clotilda guiltless, and restore
To thee thy rightful heir.

Alas! 'tis thus we varnish o'er
Our selfish motives, till no more
The space 'twixt right and wrong we mete.
All we desire, we can believe,
Ourselves the sport of self-deceit :
Thus could I of his child bereave
A brother, and myself persuade
That I, perforce, had but delayed
The atonement due to him and thee,
And to his mother's memory,
Because 'twas not the fitting time
To make confession of my crime!
Excuse for that we wish, we frame,—
Expediency the specious name
With which we veil the deed of shame!
Thou hadst been told that both were dead,
Thy wife, and he who on her head,
Ruthless, the glowing ashes heap'd;
And thou, forgiving all, hadst wept
With many a tear her timeless fate,
Which changed to pity all thy hate.

III.

“ My heart, each moment more and more,
Clung fondly to the orphan boy—
Goffredo was the name he bore ;
To me he was a spring of joy,
The one dear link that bound me to
This weary world of crime and woe.
He knew not of my guilt, though I
Had been his bitterest enemy,—
And he might learn to love me well !
I could not, dared not, say farewell
To all I prized on earth again :
I struggled,—but, alas ! in vain.
Then to the emperor Conrade’s court,
At Liege, my weary steps I bent,
My staff and harp my sole support ;
There, for my youthful charge, I meant
To use the boon which nature gave,—
The art that made me passion’s slave :
For powers misused, and cast away,
To deeper ruin pave the way ;

And he who wastes the gifts of Heaven,
For high and noble purpose given,
Falls often lower still than he,
Who boasts less mental energy.
That which had proved a source of good,
If rightly used and understood,
Perverted, had become my bane,
And rendered all my good gifts poor and vain.

IV.

“ My fame through Europe swiftly flew,
High in the Emperor's grace I grew ;
I was his favoured troubadour,—
He deemed all other music poor
And spiritless, compared with mine ;
But now it joyed me not to shine,
A minstrel's-fame its charm had lost ;
For I remembered all it cost !
Still was I honour'd and caress'd,
As ne'er before was bard who sung ;
Perchance it was that sorrow wrung
A tone of sweetness from the breast,

Would bid the careless listener start,
And wake an echo in the heart.
And had my thoughts been vacant there,
I might have won some noble fair;
But that my spirit's joy was gone,
And I was doomed to sigh alone.

V.

"It chanced the Emperor's favourite son
Perished ere youth was scarce begun;
O'erpowered by fate's relentless blow,
And dead to comfort midst his woe,
The father o'er his loss would brood,
Pining in dreary solitude,
Where none, save I, might dare intrude.
One morn, to charm his grief away,
I sang a wild and moving lay
 To a deep, plaintive strain,
Which touched the royal mourner's sense,
 And haply sooth'd his pain.
Henceforth I gain'd an influence

So great, a boon he bade me ask,
And grac'd me with a chain of gold;
To choose were no unwelcome task,—
In such a cause my heart was bold!
I pray'd thy son might be enroll'd
In the imperial train,
Wherein the names of none were told
Save those of noble strain:
And, though his birth was deemed obscure,
The monarch listened to my prayer.
He dreamt not there were none more pure
Of lineage than the minstrel's heir;
For all believed the youth my son,
Nor guessed that in his veins Boemondo's life-blood run!

VI.

“ Received within the Emperor's court,
Goffredo bore away the prize
In every martial exercise,
And brave and hardy sport:
Thus Fortune smil'd on my desire,
And made him all thou wouldst require.

And he is nurtured worthy thee,
In manly grace and courtesy :
Of mind, and form, and bearing high—
Of gentle mien, yet spirit bold,
Well fitted he proud place to hold
Amid his country's chivalry !
He was the flower of Conrade's guard ;
And so he bare himself, none dar'd
To scoff at his ignoble birth,
But rank'd him by his innate worth :
Though noble as the best was he,
Yet, thus unknown, he won the mastery.

VII.

“ At length I deemed the time was come,
When I no longer might delay
To give to his paternal home
The scion I had rent away ;
And I besought my patron's grace,
That I might then my steps retrace
Back to my native Italy—

The boon which he had fain denied,
He gave at last reluctantly ;
And with Goffredo at my side,
Our long and weary travel o'er,
I reached Salerno's walls once more.
At William's court, an honoured guest,
I was distinguished and caressed,
For my minstrel-fame had gone before.

VIII.

“ Then, as the dreaded hour drew nigh,—
The hour when we for aye should part,
How swiftly flew the moments by!
While dearer to my lonely heart
Became the youth, to whom it clung
With more than e'en a parent's love.
How oft with vain regret I hung,
While time, methought, too fast did move,
On the loved accents of that tongue,
Whose voice so long was wont to cheer
A life, which else were dark and drear !
Was I, then, doomed no more to hear

The tones, whose welcome sound recalled
Her image, who my soul had thrall'd ?
To lose him when I loved him best !
What pangs it cost I ne'er may tell—
And he had learnt to love *me* well !
Ah ! think what grief my soul oppress'd,
And then, perchance, thy noble breast
Might half forgive the foul deceit
Of one now humbled to thy feet.
He, too, would learn to loathe my sight,
Who sore traduced his mother's fame,
Who long deprived him of his right,
And robbed him of his father's name.
While yet my faltering courage failed,
And at my bitter task I quailed,
Without the walls we dwelt alone,
And there Goffredo, known by none,
With vigorous arm full oft would guide
His bounding shallop o'er the tide ;
Or learn to scale the mountain's side,
And chase the wild-boar mid the pines
That fringe the rocky Appenines.

Meanwhile, at each high festival
I took my place in William's hall,
And blithely seemed to bear my part,
As if no sorrow wrung my heart.

IX.

"One evening, as I bent my way
To where our lonely dwelling lay,
Beyond the walls, upon the bay,
Ere midnight's chime was told—
Ere yet I reached the gates, I knew
My steps were closely tracked by two,
Whose forms were shrouded from the view
In cloaks of ample fold.
At length the narrow streets were pass'd,—
I felt they gained upon me fast;
I was unarmed, yet knew no fear,
Nor dreamt that there was danger near,
Until we came, at last,
To where a lofty palace rose
In massive strength, and calm repose.

My strange pursuers bade me stand,—
Aghast, I paused at their command.
Ere I awoke from my surprise
My arms were bound, and o'er my eyes
A bandage tied : I felt 'twere vain
To make resistance, or complain.
In silence then we hurried on
Through vaulted galleries, paved with stone :
I deemed all hope of life was gone,—
Until I heard again
The voice which bade me pause before,
Command me to proceed no more.

X.

“Forthwith I stopped : the scarf unbound
With which my sight was veiled, I found
That I was in a spacious room,
Where sate a man of noble mien,
Whose brow denoted care and gloom.
Restless his glance, and aspect keen :
Methought I knew the features well,
In which, all plainly, I could spell

The lines that passion's strife had traced,
Though scarcely yet his prime was passed.
He eyed me sternly for awhile;
Then, with a cold and withering smile,
He thus addressed me,—with surprise
In the deep tones I seemed to hear
Accents familiar to mine ear:
'Why art thou here in this disguise?
Thy minstrel-garb deceives me not,
Though, since we parted, years have fled.
Hast thou Marini's son forgot?
Or think'st thou still that he is dead?
Regard me well.'—Amazed, I knew
Him whom, till now, I thought I slew
That fatal night on which I fled
My native land in guilty dread,—
A night I must for ever rue,
Whence my long course of crime begun!
'Twas Mario, the Viceroy's son,²¹
Who sate before me! whom I knew
So well in youth,—who vied with me

In dissipation's mad career,
And with me trod that path of fear,
Which leads to shame and misery.

XI.

"A transient horror chained my soul :
Had he, then, burst from death's control,
By aid of some unearthly spell ?
Sure I had seen the ghastly wound,
From which the heavy life-drops fell

Like rain upon the ground !
Or, if 'twere he in fleshly form,
Instinct with breathing life, and warm,
And no pale phantom of the tomb,
On dark, mysterious errand come,
What from his vengeance might I dread,
Who left him on the earth as dead !
While thus I pondered in amaze,
Yet scared not by his steady gaze,
The fearful pause he slowly broke,
And my rapt soul from stupor woke.—

'Thy life is in my hands,' he said,
'And I, on thy devoted head,
My treasured vengeance now may wreak—
My people, if the word I speak,
Would rack thee with such cruel art,
That, ere thy weary life depart,
Thou shouldst endure an age of pain,
Compared with which e'en death were gain.—
Or, I could hide thee in a cell
So drear and deep, that living wight
Would deem that nought therein could dwell,
Save dark, ill-omened things of night!
There could I sate my fierce revenge,
With pangs that would thy soul unhinge
To hear alone! Know that the wound
Which stretched me senseless on the ground,
Though to appearance ghastly, deep,
Did fail to wrap me in that sleep
Whence none awake. After a strife
Of many weeks, 'twixt death and life,
The last prevailed: and when I rose
To health once more, I learnt from those

Who watched beside my weary bed,
That thou in guilty fear hadst fled,—
But whither bent thy hasty flight,
Was known to none,—and till last night

I counted thee as dead.

When at the Prince's feast, I knew
(At first I doubted if 'twere true)
Thy form and features: this disguise
Had not the power to cheat mine eyes.
I bade my emissaries wait,
Concealed without the castle gate;
And when the idle pageantry,
The banquet and the minstrelsy,—
The solemn revels all were done,
In which thou bear'st thy willing part,
To lead thee here by force,—whence none,
Who have aroused mine ire, depart.
But know, a mode exists for thee
To escape a death of cruelty:
Within these walls a band doth meet
At dead of night, whose secret aim—
A noble one! is to defeat.

The Norman dynasty, and tame
The pride of that imperious race,
Whose rule hath bowed us to the dust,
And would our very name efface!
But ere our plot to thee we trust—
Ere we enroll thee, thou must swear
Ne'er to betray what thou shalt hear,
By oaths whose import dark will scare
Thy breast, and chill thy soul with fear!
Amalfi is thy native land—
Thy father's home—our cause is hers!
Then if one nobler feeling stirs
Thy bosom, haste to join our band;
For she, too, bowed her lofty head
Beneath the Norman victor's tread.
Thou art not, sure, so abject, base,
That in thy heart remains no trace
Of the brave spirit of thy race!
I had not such condition made,
Nor my just vengeance thus delay'd,
But that I mark'd thou did'st not quail,
Nor wax'd thy cheek with terror pale,

When I, e'en now, did threaten thee
That a death of lengthened agony
Should expiate thy former crime,
And glut mine anger. Scanty time
Is given thee to decide : thy fate
Is sealed, if thou dost hesitate !'

* * * * *

XII.

" Time hurries onwards ! Why repeat
The words that from Ser Mario fell ?
Suffice to say, I heard him tell
How in his palace-walls did meet,
At midnight's silent hour,
A faction adverse to the Duke,
And to the Norman power :
Many of those who darkly look
On to the day, with boding eye,
When the proud Earl of Sicily,
To whom Salerno's crown descends
When William's mild dominion ends,
Shall, with a fierce and stranger band,
O'errun their fair and fertile land.

A remnant of the Lombard race,
Whose hatred time could ne'er efface,
And those who dread our land should be
An appanage of Sicily,
Compose the faction that would shake
The Norman power, and once more make
Their fair Apulia free.

XIII.

"I was Amalfi's son. Could I
To such a cause my aid deny?—
One which aspired to quell a power
I saw above her ashes tower?
Though, under William's peaceful reign,
Her ancient spirit rose again,
What direful evils yet await
My countrymen, when Roger's hand
The sceptre wields of Puglia's land!
They would be held a rebel state,
To whom the tyrant would deny
A semblance e'en of liberty.

A vision flash'd upon my brain—
I thought of thee, and of thy son ;
And if I might my heart's-blood drain,
To atone the cruel injury done,
Not vain might such oblation prove,
To seal my penitence and love.
Briefly Ser Mario then I told
My guilty tale,—my blood ran cold
With horror, while I first betray'd
To mortal ear the ruin I had made !

XIV.

“ Why should I dwell ? I was enrolled
Amid that secret faction bold,
Which, at the silent midnight hour,
Conspire to quell the Norman power ;
And through Boemondo's name, thy son
Although unknown to him, hath won
Those who, with anger which hath lived,
Had seen him of his right deprived.
And as thou know'st our cause is strong,

Since thou hast joined our sacred band,
With all who to this state belong,
True-hearted to their native land,—
Perchance thou little thought 'twas I,
Thy brother, who our plot revealed,
And to thy loyalty appealed,
To fight with us for liberty!
Still less thou deem'dst it was thy son
Who brought thee note of what was done!
Couldst thou not, in his speaking eye,
A semblance of his mother trace?
Or mark her sweet, resistless grace,
To which all hearts were wont to bow—
The fascination that was hers,
Written in stronger characters
Upon his manly brow!

XV.

“ But calm thee yet,—give ear once more,
My gloomy tale is well-nigh o'er—
Goffredo knew not of our plot
Until this morn : I judg'd it not

The fitting time that he should know
His mournful birth—his grandsire's name—
His father—or the cruel blow
I dealt against his mother's fame,
Until our schemes were well matur'd,
And triumph to our cause insur'd ;
When yesterday, at eventide,
A fleet Salerno's harbour neared,
And soon a rumour floated wide,
That the Earl had suddenly appeared
To claim his promised bride !

XVI.

“ Through every part the rumour flew :
We knew, ere long, that it was true,
For the great nobles of the land
In haste received the Duke's command
To assemble in the banquet-hall,
And grace a royal festival,
Which he proposed last night to hold,
In honour of his kinsman bold.

Meanwhile, our anxious leaders sate
In council deep, and grave debate,
Where 'twas agreed the time was come
When we should strike the fatal blow,
By whose event our league should know
Its triumph, or its final doom.

XVII.

“ The trumpet's peal announced the feast,
But wanted now the royal guest—
Fair Isolin was placed beside
Her sire, as Roger's destined bride ;
But yet, methought, her pallid cheek
Of terror more than love did speak,
And as the bridegroom pac'd the hall,
I marked her shuddering, cold salute,—
How sate she in abstraction mute,
Heedless of that gay festival.
I saw her heart was far away,
Trembling with fear, as marble pale ;
Until, perchance her mood to veil,
The Duke forbade her longer stay.

Like one of consciousness bereft,
With faltering step the hall she left ;
Yet deign'd the Earl but little thought
Of that which seemed with mystery fraught.

XVIII.

“ The damsel gone, with wine, and song,
And quaint device, and pageantry,
Such as to royal feasts belong,
The midnight hours flew swiftly by ;
When suddenly assail'd the ear
A cry, that told of anguish near.
A messenger approach'd the Duke,
I mark'd his wild and troubled look :
After a pause, in speechless dread,
I saw Goffredo captive led
Before the Prince ; and by his side,
Pale, and in tears, the royal bride !
I know not how they met, nor where,
Goffredo and this peerless fair,
Who knelt before her father's throne,
And offered for his life her own !

I heard the Duke pronounce his doom,
To pine amid the dungeon's gloom ;
I heard the imperious Earl demand
Of William, that his daughter's hand
This day in marriage should be given
To him, before the sight of Heaven,
And thus their ancient bond fulfil—
In vain the Duke besought delay,
A week,—nay, e'en a single day !
The feeble Prince dared not gainsay
His haughty kinsman's will.

XIX.

“ The guests dispers'd, the revels done,
I sought the damsel's bower alone ;
In haste Goffredo's doom I told,
But that his life as yet was spared.
Her eye, which sad and dim appeared,
Now beamed with resolution bold :
She paused awhile—then, with the faith
Whose strength can conquer all but death,

Bade me conduct her to the place
Wherein her lover was immured,—
Nor in her bearing could I trace
The sign of pangs she had endured :
Her bosom heav'd no faltering sigh,
No tear-drop linger'd in her eye ;
Her soul with love that all defies,
Was strung to meet the enterprise
Should give the captive liberty.
From her fair brow in haste she tore
The sparkling wreath of gems she wore,
The relics of the banquet o'er ;—
Then, in a mantle closely veiled,
Whose folds her maiden-form concealed,
She bore a lamp, and on we sped
To where Goffredo's prison lay,—
Swiftly we stole with noiseless tread,
Directed by its pallid ray.
The castle all was hush'd to sleep—
Unseen we reach'd the donjon-keep :

The guard my features keenly scann'd,
When straight I bade him entrance give
To a holy priest, who came to shrive
The prisoner, by the Duke's command :
By Heaven's good grace my form he knew,
Nor doubted if my tale were true.

XX.

"The damsel, favour'd by the gloom,
Enter'd, unknown, that living tomb.
Meantime, the wicket on them barr'd,
In converse I engaged the guard ;
Until, from out the darksome cave,
I saw a mantled figure glide,
Like midnight-spectre from a grave,—
My very heart within me died !
I looked again : a glance betrayed
'Twas not the brave and generous maid—
I knew Goffredo ! On we hied
Through corridor, and portal wide ;

Until, a thousand dangers past,
With joy we gained the beach at last.
There sheltered, I in part revealed
The mystery which his birth concealed,
And in his hands a writing plac'd,
Bidding him to Ser Mario haste.
While yet he mused, ere dawnlight broke,
And from deep rest Salerno woke,
I quitted the deserted strand,
And with full heart approached the land,
Where dwelt the friends who now are gone,—
Where once, with heart unseared and free,
I knew the spirit's liberty.
Alas! with feelings chang'd and flown,
I now return'd to sigh alone!

XXI.

“ But fear not for the venturous maid,
Who for her love was not afraid
To brave the horrors of that cell,
And Roger's ire, more dark and fell.

Ere this, a scroll the Prince hath told
Of Isolina's venture bold ;
And he, who has delight in all
Pertains to knightly festival,
With jubilee, and royal state,
This day the rite will celebrate,
Which joins his race in holy tie
With the proud Earl of Sicily.
And when Salerno is intent
On song, and feast, and merriment,
Your troops without the walls must land,
And wait the signal from our band :
Then shall you greet your new-found son,
When the portentous strife is done,
In arms upon the battle-plain ;
Oh, be your meeting not in vain !
And, trust me, he his part will do,
So as to prove him worthy you ;
Whether the day be lost or won,
He will proclaim himself your son !
And now my dreaded tale is o'er—
Could I but tell what anguish sore,

What ceaseless pangs my breast have wrung,
How my lone heart to him hath clung,—
My sorrows might in part atone
The bitter wrongs in passion done ! ”

* * * * *

XXII.

So Raimond spoke his mournful tale:
And Manso, who with cheek all pale,
And quivering lip, and look amazed,
Like one bereft of sense had gazed

Upon his brother's face,
Beheld the strife that rack'd his breast,
And dark remorse, that knew no rest,

Which time could ne'er efface !
Almost his generous heart forgave
The wrongs of him, fell passion's slave ;
Repentance, too, sincere though late,
Perhaps might half extenuate
His early crime : and then the love
He bore his son, did strongly move

The father's bosom, till no more
Revengeful thoughts his bosom tore ;
In silence, Raimond's hand he wrung :
Then said, at length, with faltering tongue,
" The youth to whom my bosom yearned !
It must be true ! what thoughts have burned
Within my heart at sight of him,
Who called to mind some vision dim
Of other days ! I marvelled why,
When *he* approached, my heart beat high,
With feelings more akin to love
Than aught for many a day could move !"
He spoke : with one deep, heart-wrung sigh
To fair Clotilda's memory,
He wip'd the tear-drop from his eye,
Then summoned every energy—
While flash'd the truth upon his mind,
That treachery foul had undermin'd
By artful train, their wedded peace—
That she, in all the confidence
Of unsuspecting innocence,
And fearing nought, did but increase

The doubts that in his breast were sown,
Till peace and trust for aye were flown,
Ne'er to return, or more impart
Their balm to heal the wounded heart ;
For when love's confidence is gone,
Its trust destroyed, a look—a tone
Will to the soul conviction bring,
Or with fell doubt the bosom wring !

XXIII.

How oft, alas ! man's hapless fate
Is to be lone and desolate :
Oh ! it is this benumbs the heart,
And bids all thought of joy depart ;
Yet sometimes on our weary way,
Lightens a soft and cheering ray,—
A dream of hope—a beam of love,
A boon of mercy from above—
A light to bless existence given,
And call our wandering thoughts to Heaven :
For well we know love ne'er can die,—
"Twill bloom in immortality !

And losing those we prize most dear,
Some voice oft seems to whisper near,
And tell us we may meet again
Where tears are not, nor grief, nor pain !
But Manso was not given to know
E'en this sad solace midst his woe ;
For he had deem'd sin's withering blight
Had quench'd her soul's ethereal light,
And weighed it down, until no more
It might in native beauty soar
Back to the region whence it came,
A spark of pure, celestial flame.
Then, when he knew that she had died
Free from impure desire's control,—
Not stain'd, but rather sanctified,
What holy transport fill'd his soul !
And, for an instant, met his eye
A vision, for this world too bright :
He thought Clotilda soar'd on high
Amid the clouds, all clad in light,
And mist-like robes of virgin white ;
And beckon'd to him from the sky,

Still radiant in immortal youth,
And with the angel-smile of old,
Which once to his young bosom told
Of love, and never-fading truth !

END OF CANTO V.

THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO SIXTH.

THE STRUGGLE.

THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.

CANTO SIXTH.

THE STRUGGLE.

I.

THROUGH old Salerno's city rang
The trumpet's note and cymbal's clang,
And flowed the wine right merrily :
Ne'er shone the southern sun more bright,
Than to rejoice the nuptial rite
Of the brave Earl of Sicily.
And as the appointed hour drew near,
The voices of the multitude
Were now uprais'd in clamorous cheer,
And now to silence all subdued,
As if in expectation high
Of some unus'd solemnity.

Saint Matthew's lofty fane was thronged
With men equipped in martial trim,
Bristling in arms, of aspect grim,
Who to Earl Roger's train belonged—
So numerous, you had deemed he came
To Puglia's shores with warlike aim,
Rather to conquer, or defend,
Than a fair maiden's hand to claim.
Else what might such a host portend ?
Such retinue of men at arms,
And gallant knights, and archers tall,
Whose semblance spoke of war's alarms,
Not bridal ceremonial !

II.

Within, the sacred edifice
Glittered with gorgeous draperies :
'Twere weary task to number all
The golden images displayed
Mid sculptured shrines, in pomp arrayed,
Prescrib'd by holy ritual ;

Where Saracenic arches quaint, ²²
Mingled with Grecian columns fair,
Adorn'd the temple of the Saint
Who own'd Salerno's special care.
Thron'd in a chair of royal state,
The Earl beside the altar sate :
The silken weeds of peace he wore,
With gold and gems embroider'd o'er ;
But underneath, a shirt of mail
So subtly wrought, it might not fail
To shield the bearer's life, were he
The mark of secret treachery :
For in those troublous times, who knew
What hidden perils he might rue ?
The impetuous chief, who scarce essayed
To veil the mood his brow betrayed,
Which with dark thoughts did lour,
Now marvelled why his bride delayed
Beyond the appointed hour.

III.

In sacerdotal robe arrayed,
The holy Romualdo stood
At the high altar, undismayed
By Roger's bold, irreverend mood,—
His pious train below him ranged,
In sacred garb, in order fair ;
And he remarked, with look unchanged,
The warlike Earl's impatient air,—
How fierce the angry chief did fret,
And mutter many a hasty threat ;
While his dark brow, in wrinkles set,
And lip compress'd, reveal'd the trace
Of thoughts unmeet for hallowed place.
Still would he chide the strange delay :
What might it bode ? E'en now the day
Was well advanc'd,—the westering sun
His downward course had long begun !
The priest, by force or threat unmoved,
The Earl's unseemly haste reproved :

E'en at the head of his bold troop,
The fiery Prince was fain to stoop
To ask forgiveness at his hands ;
The future lord of those fair lands,
The lovely Isolina's dower,
Dar'd not defy the haughty prelate's power.

IV.

A tumult, vague and undefin'd,
Swelled faintly on the summer-wind ;
Till rolling onwards in its course,
It grew to murmurs deep and hoarse :
Sullen its tone, yet fitful, low,
In might and volume gathering slow,
It sounded like the distant roar
Of waters on the stormy shore ;
Ere yet the rude, imperious tide
Hath reach'd the boundary of its pride.
The priest the sacred rite prepares,
And the loud quire, with solemn airs,
For such high ceremonial meet,
Hastens the tardy bride to greet.

In truth, 'twas passing strange to hear,
Amid the pauses of the strain,
Such outcry wild as filled the ear,
And made the choral anthem vain.
Within, the voices spoke of heaven,
Without, of men to frenzy driven !
Yet still the holy chaunt went on,
And curling wreaths of incense rare
Loaded the faint and sultry air,
From silver censers thrown.
Meanwhile the hideous din increased ;
Then shrieks, and clash of deadly blows,
High mid the angry storm arose—
Thrice paused the heavenly strain—then ceased.
So the heart's music is subdued
And lost amid the clamour rude
Of the hard world, whose jarring din
Oft drowns the soft, low voice within,
Till heard again in solitude.
The monkish train in terror fled,
And to their quiet cloister sped,

To tell their beads, and pray alone,
Until the fearful strife were done.

V.

At those portentous sounds the Earl,
Who erst had sat in sullen mood,
And by his lip's disdainful curl,
His brow, where rose the mantling blood,
Told how it gall'd his fiery soul
• To brook the powerful priest's control,
Now, for an instant, paus'd to hear
Those mingled notes of wrath and fear.
Familiar with the dreadful sound,
Like famish'd wolf that scents afar
The steam of carnage on the air,
That outcry caus'd his heart to bound,
And his stern bosom moved :
As one who to the dregs hath quaff'd,
In eager thirst, a generous draught,
With savage joy his spirit laugh'd,
To hear the notes it loved !

His eyes flash'd fire—he wav'd his blade,—
His arm'd attendants passage made ;
And, as he near'd the portal wide,
“ On, my brave comrades, on ! ” he cried :
“ Who would have deem'd such fortune ours,
As thus to cheat the lagging hours
With the brave sport we love !
Follow me to the battle-field,
And shame on him who e'er would yield,
Nor die his worth to prove ! ”

VI.

Now raved the battle fierce and wild,
The place with heaps of slain was pil'd ;
And the hot pavement steam'd with gore,
Where gush'd the purple wine before.
With vigorous onslaught few might bide,
Roger the thickening foe defied ;
Brandishing high his glittering blade,
He stalked mid danger undismay'd,
And ever foremost in the fray,
Alone, unaided cut his way.

And when his sword was snapp'd in twain,
As with a mighty stroke he cleft
A rebel Lombard to the brain,
Though of his treacherous blade bereft,
With curtal-axe and shield he fought,—
Still through the foe dire havoc made,
And desperate feats of valour wrought,
Nor force combined his fury stay'd :
He revell'd, fearless, in the strife,
As though he bare a charmed life.
And all unlike such rude affray,
When martial prowess won the meed
By strength of arm, and doughty deed,
To the battle-field of later day,
Where the artillery's roar supplies
The clash of arms, the exulting cries,
With which the gallant knights of old
Were wont to cheer their followers bold.

* * * * *

VII.

The Duke, meantime, at early morn
Had heard the startling tidings borne
By Raimond's messenger. In dread,
Lest reason, or e'en life, were fled,
Scar'd by the horrors of that cell,
Where only loathsome things might dwell,
With hasty steps he bent his way,
Through spiral pathway, worn and steep,
To where the vaulted prisons lay,
Impervious to the light of day,
Sunk in the rocky mountain deep :
There saw the Prince, amaz'd, his child,
Her look compos'd, and aspect mild,
Buried in sweet and tranquil sleep,—
Reclin'd upon the stony bed,
Her white arm plac'd beneath her head !
Her hair escap'd the band she wore,
And swept the dungeon's slimy floor ;
A gentle smile play'd o'er her face,
Where cold dismay had left no trace :

Spite of the gloomy horrors there,
Which had no power her soul to move,
She dreamt she wandered with her love
Mid mansions bright, and groves more fair,
Than to this dreary world belong ;
And ever fell upon her ear
Such raptures of celestial song,
Mingled with harpings, loud and clear,
From unseen minstrels, as did raise
Her soul to thoughts of love and praise.
The terrors of the ghastly cell
Could not her dreams of heaven dispel,
And such bright visions met her eyes,
As chang'd it to a paradise.
So beams the soul's ethereal spark,
Unquench'd amid its dwelling dark :
Ah ! pity 'twere such dream to break,
And bid her to her woes awake,
To call her back to life and sorrow,
And to the sad and gloomy morrow !
Thus, in our selfish grief, we fain
Would call the dear ones back again

From the deep sleep of death, to share
The burthen all on earth must bear !

VIII.

'The damsel from her slumber started,
And all her visions bright departed.
She look'd around in wild amaze,
Half blinded by the torch's blaze :
The terrors of the by-gone night
Repass'd before her mental sight,
In melancholy, dark array,
Chasing all happy thoughts away.
When first she woke, scarce could she deem
Them aught but some perturbed dream,—
So sudden and so dire the blow,
Which all her treasur'd hopes laid low !
Then, as her memory slowly woke,
She rose,—but neither sigh'd nor spoke :
Trembling to ask Goffredo's fate,
And if her succour came too late—
The accents died upon her tongue,
While to her father's arm she clung,

And gaz'd in silence in his face.
The Prince, in whose paternal breast
No angry feeling now had place,
All words of stern rebuke repress'd,
Nor to her speaking look replied ;
But gave her to her maiden's care,
Bidding her for the rite prepare
Should make her Roger's happy bride !
At sound of that detested name,
A shudder crept through all her frame ;
But, save that token, she express'd
No terror at her sire's behest.
And when the fatal hour arrived,
Like one of consciousness deprived,
And unresisting, still sate she,
E'en when they deck'd her as a bride,
And round her brows the chaplet tied,
With which young virgins were array'd
For such august solemnity.
And then the summons she obey'd,
To join the nuptial cavalcade,

With sembl'd haste, and step so free,
But that in her pale, haggard face,
And restless glances, you might trace
The signs of mortal agony,
You had believ'd that with her went,
The sanction of her heart's consent !
So, for a moment, deem'd her sire,
Until her clay-cold hand he took,
And mark'd her sad and stony look !
Her heart seem'd blighted, like the lyre
Whose chords are shatter'd,—to whose strings
The wandering wind no music brings,
And winter's gale, and vernal sigh,
Rise, fall, and sweep unheeded by !
For so 'tis with the broken heart,
Which music may no more impart,
But dead alike to good or ill,
Gives back no sweet, responsive thrill.

IX.

And now, emerging from the gate,
In all the pomp of regal state,

The nuptial train, in long array,
Wound slowly down the rocky way.
Knights in armour, two and two,
Paced the lofty archway through ;
In crimson housings, trapp'd with gold,
Proudly stepp'd their chargers bold ;
And silken pennons flutter'd high,
And martial music fill'd the sky,
With notes of stirring melody.
Caparison'd in princely pride,
A milk-white palfrey bore the bride,
And round about, a bevy bright
Of maidens walk'd, all clad in white,
 Bearing the royal canopy.
Before the Duke the minstrels went,
In flowing robes that swept the ground,
Their brows with laurel-chaplets bound ;
Who, when the trumpet's blast was spent,
With mingled voice and harp prolong
The burthen of the nuptial song :
As on they pass'd, the gaping crowd,
Greeted the bride both long and loud.

Slow mov'd the glittering cortège on,
Until the square was almost won,
When cries of treason shook the air!
In haste, the Duke wheel'd round his steed,
And bade his train with utmost speed
Back to the castle walls repair.
This o'er—his child in safety placed,
His former steps he quick retraced:
For William ever in the fight
Demean'd him as a gallant knight;
And though of mild and peaceful mood,
Yet when occasion rous'd his blood,
The bravest of the brave was he,
And worthy his bold ancestry.
Unarmed, save with sword and shield,
He spurr'd his courser to the field:
A hundred knights in gleaming steel,
And eager for the fray,
Rode after him with martial zeal,
In chivalrous array.

X.

More wildly now the combat raged,
For Manso, in the strife engaged, ²³
Led on his troops, who fought like men
Whose doom was to be seal'd e'en then,
In death or liberty:
For this they spent their latest sigh,
And pour'd their life-blood cheerfully;
And such bright flame each breast inspired,
As once their Roman fathers fired: ²⁴
But all in vain—the die was cast,
Amalfi's ancient glories past!
Goffredo bare him as became
His country, and his grandsire's name,—
As one who knew not how to yield!
And when the tide of battle turned,
When Roger for the contest burned,
And the Lombards fled the field, ²⁵
Alone, Amalfi stemm'd the fight,
And bravely struggled for her right,

Until by numbers overcome,
Her children bow'd to meet their doom.

XI.

Amid the slain two forms were seen,
Where the fierce fray had hottest been ;
They lay extended side by side,—
In glorious death at last allied,
They shar'd one common grave :
Nobly they fell ! the one to save
His new-found son, the young and brave,—
The other, in the cause so high
Of country, love, and liberty !
And one tall figure o'er them stood,
Whose hands were wet with Norman blood ;
From whose left side, a ghastly wound
Rain'd heavy drops upon the ground.
Still might be seen in his wild air
The reckless courage of despair ;
Long fought he o'er those forms beloved,
And well the foe his valour proved :

Full many a Norman warrior fell,
Whose death-cry was his funeral knell ;
Till, faint with loss of blood, he knelt,
But, still unconquer'd, blindly dealt
Vain strokes 'gainst those who press'd around :
His eye grew-dim,—his head swam round,—
He sunk upon the slippery ground ;
And as, with faltering breath, he sigh'd
Clotilda's name, the minstrel died !

XII.

So Raimond fell ! defending those
On whom he brought so many woes ;
And if the keen remorse he felt
Might not atone his early guilt,
Still had he deeply, dearly paid
The penalty of faith betray'd !
And thus the noble Manso won,
Amid defeat and death, his son :
He met him, fighting for the land
Where dwelt his sires,—he grasp'd his hand,

Red with the life-blood of his foes ;
To Heaven his grateful prayer arose !
And a dim vision fill'd his brain,
Ere he expir'd, that not in vain
Might such example one day prove,
His country's energies to move.
His hope was vain ! From that sad hour, ²⁶
Amalfi, shorn of all her power,
Dwindled from her imperial state ;
And losing all but Nature's dower,—
Unrivall'd beauty, shar'd the fate
Of nations which have once been great.

* * * * *

XIII.

The strife of battle all was o'er,
And shrieks and groans arose no more,
To affright the pure and loving air
With notes of death and wild despair.
Again the orb that rules the night
Rolls on in splendour, calmly bright,

And o'er the bosom of the bay,
Hath trac'd with gems her sparkling way.
 Serene in cloudless majesty,
The blue, ethereal vault of heaven,
 Great emblem of eternity !
Appears like some vast, waveless sea,
Never by angry tempest driven,
Studded with many a golden isle,
That sparkles in the moonbeam's smile ;
Where spirits blest perchance may rove,
And meet once more with those they love,
To part no more—no more to know
Keen disappointment's bitter throe !
And now on pine-clad steep, and rock, and tower,
The moon's soft beams their gentle radiance pour,
Revealing all the landscape, fair and bright,
But lovelier seen in her sweet, pensive light :
All objects in unclouded splendour glow,
Save where a misty wreath plays round the mountain's brow.

XIV.

Yet still within her silent bower,
E'en when the night began to lour
And spread her shadows o'er the land,
The beauteous Isolina sate,
Clad in her robes of nuptial state,
Her pale brow resting on her hand.
No colour mantled in her cheek,—
Once, but in vain, she strove to speak,
As if she fain would tidings ask ;
Then shrunk, unequal to the task.
And now the world seem'd wrapp'd in sleep ;
No ruder sounds the damsel reach
Than the low ripple of the deep,
As it broke upon the pebbly beach.
The din of fight was past away,
Yet all unmov'd she sate, and still ;
Well might her death-like aspect fill
Her wondering maidens with dismay !
She saw, from open casement high,
The moonlit deep beneath her lie,

And felt the breath of evening's sigh
Play o'er her soft cheek wooingly :
She called to mind the pledge she gave
To her betrothed but yesternight,
To meet him by the limpid wave,
And end their doubts and fears by flight:
Half she arose—then sunk again—
The thought bewilder'd sore her brain ;
Till with a deep and heart-wrung sigh,
She droop'd in silent apathy.

XV.

Steps in the corridor were heard ;
The damsel neither breath'd nor stirr'd,
But listened with so still an air,
You would have thought no fear was there.
The footsteps, as they came more near,
Fell palpably upon her ear,
Chilling her soul with nameless dread,
As if some omen dark she read
In the dull, heavy, measur'd tread.

At length, the portal opening wide,
Two black and mantled forms she spied :
One in his hands a casket bore
Of gold, with gems besprinkled o'er ;
The other held on high
A blazing torch, whose flickering light,
Through the dark shadows of the night,
Gleam'd strange and fitfully.
They knelt before the royal maid,
And he who bore the casket said,
" Our lord, Earl Roger, bids us greet
The princess well, and sends to her
A scroll, writ in strange character,—
For such a bride an offering meet ;
And prays that she would read therein,
How he a damsel fair would win."

XVI.

As her dilated eyeballs fell
Upon the gleaming case of gold,
A shudder, scarce perceptible,
Crept through her frame, as marble cold ;

Like summer-air, that steal upon
The surface of some glassy deep,
Ruffling the stream as on they sweep,
Fitful, and brief—and then are gone:
So slight was it, so quickly past,
That scarcely in it might be trac'd
The harrowing fear that shook her soul,
Half-mastering reason's faint control.
With gesture slow she rais'd her hand,—
The men obey'd the mute command,
Unclos'd the casket's jewell'd lid,
And bar'd to view what there lay hid.
What met her gaze?—The scarf she gave
To her belov'd but yesternight;
And which the moon had seen her wave,
To bid Goffredo haste and save
His own betroth'd by flight!
Her mother's scarf!—that holy pledge,
On which, how fervently! she sware,
On that same night to meet him there,
By the blue water's edge!

XVII.

She clasp'd it to her throbbing heart—
What means that wild and maddening start,
That look of horror and dismay ?
Her arms fell nerveless at her side,
She dropp'd the scarf, as though she spied
Where in its folds a scorpion lay
Concealed,—*she felt* 'twas dabbled o'er
With big dark gouts of recent gore ;
Her bridal robes with blood were wet,
Fresh from the heart, and warm e'en yet !
One shriek of anguish pierc'd the gloom,—
Then all was silent as the tomb.
Her look the boldest breast had chilled—
Her very heart's warm stream was stilled ;
No consciousness inform'd her eye,
Whose gaze was fix'd on vacancy :
Even those fierce and cruel men,
Belike unmov'd by woe till then,
Were with a sudden awe inspired,
And from the chamber slow retired,

As half reluctant to behold
A sight that bade their blood run cold.

XVIII.

Awhile she stood : the closed door,
Re-echoing through the corridor,
Awoke her from that stony trance :
She cast one horror-stricken glance
Upon the fatal scarf, which lay
Before her in the moon's pale ray ;
Then press'd her hands upon her heart,
Her eye distent, her lips apart :
Cold drops her pallid cheek bedew,
While swell'd each artery, faintly blue,
As if unable to contain
The tides that mounted to her brain.
In truth it was a fearful sight,
The pangs that shook her form so light,
And rent those peerless charms :
Fierce spasms wrung her clammy brow—
She gasp'd for breath—then murmuring low,
Sunk in her maiden's arms ;

Then a brief struggle, and her soul
Had burst the bonds of earth's control,
And, freed from anguish, wing'd its flight
Back to its native region bright,—
To that blest home beyond the sky,
Where tears are wip'd from every eye,
Where sorrow is unknown, and care,
And death, and gloom, and blank despair.

XIX.

Hark ! 'tis the midnight chime,
From holy Matthew's temple rung,
Pealing slow and mournfully,
Which tells, with hoarse, relentless tongue,
Of yet another day gone by,
From life's brief sum of time !

XX.

Since last that chime of midnight told
Its oft unheeded tale,
Full many a warrior, fierce and bold,
Lies stretch'd in slumber dark and cold,
With cheek all damp and pale :
And youths and maids, whose hearts beat high,
Scarce deeming *they* should ever die,
Are deaf to that dull, mournful tale,
That record of mortality !

XXI.

Thus Isolina, ere her day
Of early bloom had pass'd away,
Like flowret doom'd to droop and die,
And sink beneath the chilling sigh,
The blight of autumn's withering breath,
Yielded her loveliness to death.
The heart that never imag'd aught
Of ill to others, but was fraught

With truth and all-confiding love,
With lofty, pure, ennobling thought,
And self-devotion, which might move
All but a bosom sear'd and dried
By envy, fierce revenge, and pride—
That gentle heart was pierc'd and riven,
Until her brain, to frenzy driven,
Whirl'd madly 'neath its weight of pain,—
And then was still, ne'er more to throb and love again !

XXII.

How calm she lies ! In the sweet smile
That beams upon the pallid face—
The rapt repose—ah ! who may trace
What mortal suffering erewhile
With anguish wrung that moveless brow !
Her spirit is at rest e'en now,
And it hath pass'd its shadow o'er
The form wherein it dwelt before :
Like as the sun, when sunk to rest
In the cloudy chambers of the west,
Leaves on the face of heaven a ray,

A relic of departed day,
Lovely, but soon, how soon ! to pass away.

XXIII.

The fell destroyer cannot wake
The tongue that like an angel spake,
In tones so sweet, they breath'd of heaven :
And the blue eye, that once did beam
With light by the Creator given,
Lies closed in sleep that knows no dream.
What was the maiden's crime,—to love
With brightest, purest, holiest flame ?
Ah ! deem not that was to her shame,
Since love like hers is from above,
And, all too pure for this dull earth,
Turns to the region of its birth.
And she is gone, her sorrows o'er,
To meet her love, and part no more ;
And to redeem the pledge she gave
Last even, by the moonlit wave !

And now my winter's task is done,
In days long glided by begun ;
Then thrown aside, to be resumed
When time life's onward path had gloomed,
And scatter'd all the hopes and schemes
Of youth, like morning's pleasant dreams.
And thus my mournful tale is told—
A tale of sorrow, trite and old,
Of broken hearts that once swell'd high,
Amid life's careless revelry ;
And how the virtuous and the brave
Were soon forgotten in the grave !

Perchance their spirits calmly smile,
When they recal their lot the while
They dwelt on earth—the care, the toil,
They suffered in their mortal coil !
E'en we look back upon the past
With mingled feelings of regret,
Forgetting griefs which did not last,
Remembering joys that haunt us yet :
For time can throw a mist upon
The memory of years long gone ;
And o'er the dreams of other days,
A mild and soften'd radiance plays.
What space below is given to man
From the vast gulf of time ? A span,
So brief—so quickly past away,
It seems but as some changeful day
To those who near the shadowy goal,
To which the waves of ages roll ;
And whither all, whate'er betide,
With swift and noiseless footsteps glide—
So swift, their fleeting day is done,
Ere yet they deem it scarce begun.

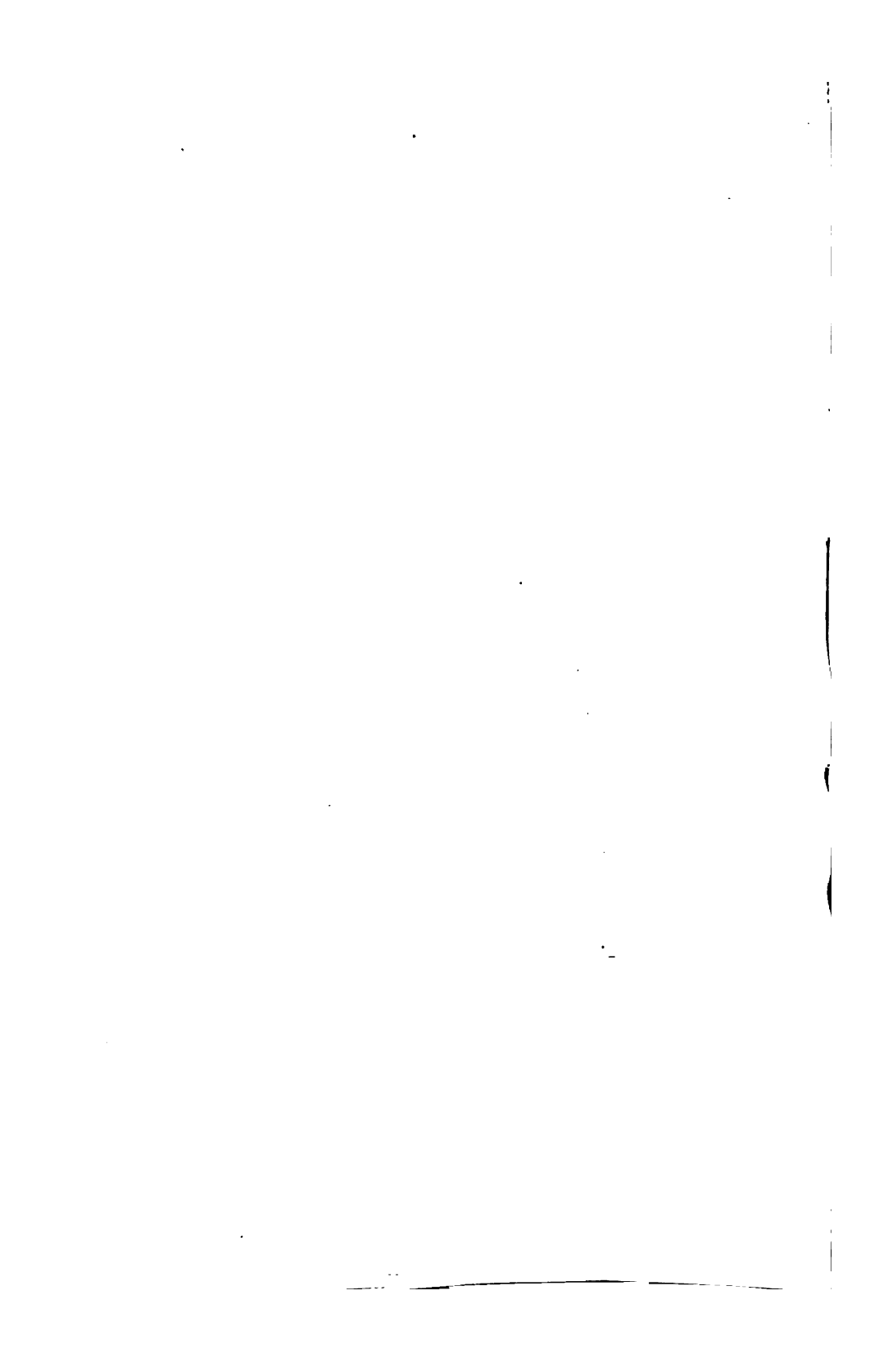
Yet mortals fain would limit all
Their hopes and fears to point so small,
In the wide undiscover'd sea
Of time, and dim eternity !
And what are pomp, and state and power ?
The crumbling pageant of an hour :
And happiness ? a baseless dream,
As transient as the meteor's gleam !

END OF CANTO VI. AND LAST.

N O T E S

TO

THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.



NOTES.

NOTE 1.

"Who, quitting Ardennes for the Syrian strand—"

Page 11.

THE castle of Bouillon, from whence the celebrated Godfrey, general of the first crusade and king of Jerusalem, took his title, is situated in the woody and mountainous tract called the Ardennes. The wood of Soignies is supposed to be a remnant of the forest of Ardennes, immortalized by Shakspeare in *As You Like It*; and celebrated by Boiardo in his *Orlando*. Tacitus also mentions it as the spot where the Germans successfully contended with the Roman legions. Godfrey mortgaged his principality in the year 1096 to the bishopric of Liege, for the sum of 1500 silver marks, on condition that if he returned from the Holy Land, the estate should be restored to him; otherwise to remain attached to the diocese. Ten days after the taking of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, a council of the princes assembled to elect one of their number to fill the throne of David and Solomon. Robert, Count of Flanders, opened the council by protesting that no consideration should induce him to accept the sovereignty, were it offered to him. It was then decided that the election should be confided to a committee of ten, the most remarkable amongst the clergy and laity of the army. After a long and mature deliberation, the crown was adjudged to Godfrey of Bouillon, as the one most worthy to wear it. This choice was ratified by the acclamations of the whole army. The monarch elect was con-

ducted in triumph to the Holy Sepulchre, when he took the oaths of observance to the laws of honour and justice. However, with pious humility, Godfrey refused the diadem, and the other ensigns of royalty : he was unwilling, say the *Assises de Jerusalem*, “ Estre sacré et corosné roy de Jerusalem, parce que il ne vult porter corosme d’or là où le roy des roys, Jesus Christ, le fils de Dieu, porta la corosme d’épine le jour de sa passion.”—*Preface des Assises*.

Godfrey did not long survive the accomplishment of the great object of the first Crusade ; namely, the deliverance of Jerusalem from the power of the Saracens. He died there, one year and three days after, on the 18th July, 1100. “ A la mort de cet illustre capitaine et tres noble Athlete du Christ,” says the historian, Albert d’Aix, “ tous les Chrétiens, Français, Italiens, Syriens, Arméniens, Grecs, la plupart des Gentils eux mêmes, Arabes, Sarasins, et Turcs, se liverent aux larmes pendant cinq jours, et firent entendre des douloureuses lamentations.” His remains were interred, amid all the pomp of the Catholic church, on Mount Calvary, near the Sepulchre of Jesus Christ, which he had rescued by his valour from the hands of the unbelievers. The following inscription was engraved in Latin upon his tomb : “ Here reposes Godfrey of Bouillon, who subdued this land to Christianity. May his soul reign with Jesus Christ.” Godfrey died without issue.

NOTE 2.

“ *A throne in Puglia’s realm by wit and valour won.*”

Page 12.

“ Robert, the sixth son of Tancred of Hauteville. The surname of Guiscard was applied to this master of political wisdom ; and Robert is praised by the Apulian poet for excelling the cunning of Ulysses, and the eloquence of Cicero. The Norman writers most conversant with their own idiom, interpret Guiscard, or Wiscard, by *callidus*, a cunning man.”—*Gibbon*.

NOTE 3.

"Who sang of knightly impress high—"

Page 18.

"Le donne, i cavalier, l'armi, gl'amori,
Le cortesie, l'audaci impressi io canto."

Orlando Furioso. Canto 1.

NOTE 4.

*"Save his, who to the seaman gave
A guide to lead him o'er the wave."*

Page 21.

The invention of the mariner's compass is attributed to Flavio Gioia, a native of Pasitano, a small village in the dukedom of Amalfi.

NOTE 5.

"William of Hauteville holds this night—"

Page 24.

William, the third duke of Apulia of the Norman line, and grandson of Robert le Guiscard, died A.D. 1127. At his death, his kinsman Roger, the great Earl of Sicily, joined to his dominions those of Apulia.

NOTE 6.

"From holy Matthew's temple rung—"

Page 28.

The cathedral of Salerno was founded by Robert le Guiscard, in honour of St. Matthew the Evangelist, the patron saint of Salerno. "In eadem verò civitate Salerni ipse Du Robertus construxit ecclesiam in honorem Matthæi Apostoli et Evangelistæ."

Muratori, Antiquitates Italicæ mediæ ævi. Tom. i.

NOTE 7.

"Tancred, the lord of Hauteville—"

Page 32.

Tancred, the father of Robert the Guiscard, was lord of the castle of Hauteville, in the diocese of the Coutances, in Lower Normandy. He was a nobleman of rank and influence in the court and army of the Duke; and his military service was furnished by ten soldiers or knights. He was the father of twelve sons, by two marriages, both of a rank equal to his own. Ten of them, as they successively attained the vigour of manhood, left the paternal roof, crossed the Alps, and joined the Norman camp at Aversa. Robert was the eldest of the seven sons of the second marriage; and even the reluctant praise of his enemies has attributed to him the exalted qualities of a warrior and a statesman. His lofty stature surpassed the tallest of his army, his limbs were cast in the true proportion of strength and gracefulness, and even to the decline of life, he maintained the patient vigour of health, and the commanding dignity of his form. His complexion was ruddy, his shoulders were broad, his hair and beard were long, and of a flaxen colour, his eyes sparkled with fire, and his voice, like that of Achilles, could impress obedience and terror amidst the tumult of a battle. In the ruder ages of chivalry, such qualifications are not below the notice of the poet and the historian. According to the Greeks, he departed from his father's castle in Normandy, with only five followers on horseback, and thirty on foot; but even this allowance appears too bountiful, for the sixth son of Tancred of Hauteville passed the Alps as a pilgrim, and his first military band was levied among the adventurers of Italy. On the death of his brother Humphrey, Guiscard was exalted on a buckler, and saluted Count of Apulia, and general of the republic. By some acts of rapine or sacrilege, he had incurred the papal excommunication; but Nicholas the Second was easily persuaded that the division of friends could terminate only in their mutual prejudice; that the Normans were faithful champions of the holy see; and it was safer to trust the alliance of a Prince than the caprice of an aristocracy. His grati-

tude and policy conferred on Robert and his posterity the ducal title, with the investiture of Apulia, Calabria, and all the lands, both in Italy and Sicily, which his sword could rescue from the schismatic Greeks, and the unbelieving Saracens.

From his first wife, Alberada, the partaker of his humble fortunes, he had been divorced under the pretence of consanguinity; and her son Bohemond was destined to imitate, rather than to succeed, his illustrious father. The second wife of Guiscard was Sikelgaita, the daughter of Guimarius, and the sister of Gisulphus, the last of the Lombard princes of Salerno, he having deprived Gisulphus of his dominions. The Lombards acquiesced in the succession of their son Roger.—*Gibbon*.

Robert the Guiscard died at Casapolis, in the island of Corfu, A. D. 1085, in the sixtieth year of his age. This year was also remarkable for the death of two other celebrated personages; namely, Pope Hildebrand, and William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, and King of England.

A rather curious similarity may be traced between the fortunes of Robert le Guiscard, and those of the great conqueror of modern times, Napoleon Buonaparte. Both, from comparatively obscure situations in life, extended their conquests in distant countries, and became powerful and warlike sovereigns; both found it convenient to divorce the partners of their humble fortunes, and to seek and obtain royal and influential alliances; and both were enabled to raise members of their respective families to the rank of reigning princes. It is also remarkable, that the lines of both soon became extinct; that of Napoleon in the first generation, and that of Guiscard, both in Salerno and Antioch, in the second.

NOTE 8.

*"They stood beneath the shadowy cave,
To which the secret passage gave—"*

Page 46.

I have the authority of Boccaccio for supposing that such a passage

as I have described, existed in the palace of the ancient princes of Salerno.

NOTE 9.

*"To form alliance with the line
Of the old Lombard dynasty."*

Page 56.

"Cognito præterea, quod predicta Alberada sibi affinis esset, parat divortium, sororemque Salernitani principis cepit expetere in conjugium, quod et factum est. Et Alberada dona conferens plurima Calabriam cum Sikelgaita perrexit. Latebat forte politicum ingenium. Ut novam dominationem ineunti sibi, Salernitanum principem affinitatis nexu obstringeret."—*Chronica Capinensis Patri Benedicti*. Cap. 6.

NOTE 10.

"Sikelgaita was her name—"

Page 57.

Gaita, or Sikelgaita, the second wife of Robert, and sister of the last Prince of Salerno, is represented by the Greeks as "a warlike Amazon, a second Pallas; less skilful in arts, but not less terrible in arms than the Athenian goddess."

NOTE 11.

*"The offspring of this martial fair
Was Roger, Puglia's second duke,
Unworthy son of such a pair."*

Page 57.

"Roger, the second son and successor of Guiscard, on his father's death immediately sank to the comparatively humble station of a Duke of

Apulia : the esteem or partiality of his father left the valiant Boemondo his dominions in the East. The male line of Robert was extinguished, both in Apulia and at Antioch, in the second generation ; and on the death of his grandson, William Duke of Apulia, A.D. 1127, Roger Earl of Sicily, who had been anxiously watching the declining health of his kinsman, sailed from Palermo, on the first intelligence of his premature death, with seven galleys ; cast anchor in the bay of Salerno ; received, after two days' negotiation, an act of fidelity from the Norman capital ; commanded the submission of the barons ; and extorted a legal investiture from the reluctant Popes, who could not long endure either the friendship or enmity of a powerful vassal."—*Gibbon*.

NOTE 12.

" *The brave Boemondo, Europe's pride.*"

Page 57.

" Comes Robertus Guiscardus anno Domini MLX vocatus a Trojanis civibus ipsorum civitatem in suam potestatem suscepit. Qui non post multos dies cum suo exercitu in Calabria Cursensium cepit, ac omnium Normannorum Dux factus est. Et accepit uxorem Sicligadam, Guimarii principis Salerni filiam, ex qua habuit filios Rogerium, Robertum et Guidonem, et filias quinque. Ex altera prima verò uxore, nomine Alberada, primo habuit filium nomine Boemundum."—*Muratori*.

NOTE 13.

" *Which swift Orontes' waters lave.*"

Page 57.

The river Orontes is called by the natives El-aazy, or the Rebel, on account of its swiftness.

NOTE 14.

"Near which old Daphne's cedars tower."

Page 58.

Daphne, which is mentioned in the history of Maccabees, (1. 11. c. 4. 5. 33), and which stood about five miles from Antioch, was reckoned one of the suburbs of that city. Here Seleucus planted a grove, about ten miles in circumference; erected a temple, in the centre of it, to Apollo and Diana; and consecrated the whole as an asylum or sanctuary. To this place the inhabitants of Antioch were accustomed to resort for amusement, as the Romans did to Baïæ, and the Alexandrians to Canopus; and as, in modern times, the citizens of London to Richmond and Hampton Court; but in process of time, it was so much frequented by the votaries of Venus and Bacchus, rather than those of Apollo and Diana, that it was avoided as infamous by all who had any regard for their reputation; and at length, "*Daphnicis moribus vivere*,"—to live after the manner of Daphne, became a proverbial expression to denote the most dissolute course of life. It was, indeed, the general characteristic of the inhabitants of Antioch, in almost every period of their history, to live after this manner; and to their voluptuous disposition may be ascribed many of the numerous calamities which have befallen this celebrated city.

NOTE 15.

"Fam'd Antioch owned Boemondo's power."

Page 58.

"Robert bequeathed to his eldest son Boemondo, all that he had conquered in the East; and to his second son Roger, by Sikelgaita, the dukedoms of Puglia and Calabria, the principality of Salerno, and all that he possessed in Italy."—*Giannone*.

"The name of Bohemond, the son of Robert Guiscard, was already famous by his double victory over the Greek emperor."—*Gibbon*.

NOTE 16.

"With fair Sicilia's diadem."

Page 82.

Roger, the great Earl of Sicily, and nephew of Robert Guiscard, was next heir male to his kinsman William Duke of Apulia; and on the death of the latter, he joined the two kingdoms.

NOTE 17.

"Amalfi! sovereign of the sea—"

Page 121.

The following is the description of Amalfi by William of Apulia:

"Nulla magis locuples argento, vestibus, auro,
 Partibus innumeris: hac plurimus urbe moratur
 Nauta maris cœlique vias aperire peritus.
 Huc et Alexandri diversa feruntur ab urbe
 Regis, et Antiochi. Gens hæc freta plurima transit,
 His Arabes, Indi, Siculi nascuntur et Afri.
 Hæc gens est totum prope nobilitata per orbem,
 Et mercando ferens, et amans mercata referre."

NOTE 18.

"Where are her royal merchants now?"

Page 124.

"Seven miles to the west of Salerno, and thirty to the south of Naples, the town of Amalfi displayed the power and rewards of industry. The land, however fertile, was of narrow extent, but the sea was accessible and open; the inhabitants first assumed the office of supplying the Western world with the manufactures and productions of the East. The government was popular, and under the administration and supremacy of the Greek emperor. Fifty thousand citizens were numbered in the

walls of Amalfi; nor was any city more abundantly provided with gold, silver, and the objects of precious luxury. The mariners, who swarmed in her port, excelled in the theory and practice of navigation and astronomy; and the discovery of the compass, which has opened the globe, is due to their ingenuity or good fortune. Their trade was extended to the coasts, or at least to the commodities of Africa, Arabia, and India; and their settlements in Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, acquired the privileges of independent colonies. After three hundred years of prosperity, Amalfi was oppressed by the arms of the Normans, and sacked by the jealousy of Pisa; but the poverty of one thousand fishermen is yet dignified by the remains of an arsenal, a cathedral, and the palaces of royal merchants."—*Gibbon*.

NOTE 19.

"The chosen rulers of the state."

Page 124.

"In process of time this dukedom so exalted itself, that the Amalfitans became famous for navigation all over the East, and increased both in power and riches: therefore they made and sustained many wars; they assumed the power of making laws in relation to trade, and the commerce of the sea,—which with us had the same force and authority as the Rhodian law had with the Romans; and Marino Freccia testifies that all disputes about navigation and maritime commerce were decided by the Amalfitan laws. And who is not aware that the wonderful invention of the mariner's compass is owing to Flavio Gioia, a native of Pasitano, a small village of the dukedom? They likewise assumed the prerogative of coining money, which they laid out in all the eastern nations; likewise the Tarini Amalfitani became so famous, which are mentioned in our customs and in many old charters. They elected their dukes out of their own body, although they were afterwards confirmed and made patricians by the emperors of the East. They became much more famous and renowned in time of the Normans, as in the progress of this history will be seen; and they enjoyed this liberty until the year

1075, that Robert Guiscard having subdued Salerno, added this dukedom to his dominions, although for a long time they still retained some vestiges of their decaying liberty."—*Giannone's History of Naples*, b. vii.

The early history of Amalfi is involved in great obscurity, and but little is known of it until it was finally conquered by Roger. In some of the Greek writers of that period, however, allusions are occasionally made to naval encounters with the Saracens, who then infested the coasts of Italy. We also read of Counts of Amalfi; and that afterwards there arose an independent people, governed by their Doges. Mansone Fusile first assumed this title, in the year 897.

NOTE 20.

"And caused her haughty foe to bow."

Page 124.

Pisa, with whom Amalfi long and often successfully struggled.

NOTE 21.

"'Twas Mario, the Viceroy's son—"

Page 163.

Guiscard, after subduing the Amalfitans, governed them by a Viceroy; but after his death, and during the reigns of his son and grandson, they were governed by their own Dukes, subject, however, to the supremacy of the Princes of Salerno.

NOTE 22.

*"And Saracenic arches quaint,
Mingled with Grecian columns fair,
Adorned the temple of the Saint
Who owned Salerno's special care."*—Page 189.

"The interior court of the cathedral of Salerno is surrounded with

columna, said to have been brought from Pæstum by Duke Robert, whose son Roger, and grandson William, are buried here. In the centre of the court is a large granite basin or patera, said also to have been brought from Pæstum. The cathedral is dedicated to the evangelist St. Matthew, whose bones were transported here in the year 950, when Gisulphus was sovereign of the principality."—*Cruise's Tour in Southern Naples*.

NOTE 23.

"For Manco, in the strife engaged—"

Page 203.

Lest it should appear impossible that the Amalfitans could have had sufficient time to land without the walls of Salerno after the conclusion of Raimond's tale, it must be remembered that the distance between the two cities is only seven miles; and that, with a tolerably fair wind, the voyage may be accomplished easily in about one hour.

NOTE 24.

"As once their Roman fathers fired."

Page 203.

"The Amalfitans claimed to be descended from a Roman colony; and affirmed that their ancestors, sent by Constantine the Great to Byzantium, were shipwrecked at Ragusa, and dwelt long in Illyria: that afterwards they crossed the Adriatic, and established themselves at Melfi, in Apulia, where they remained for a lengthened period; that finally they quitted that province in search of a country where they might enjoy entire freedom, and it was then that they first founded a city on the Gulph of Salerno, which still bears the name of Amalfi."—*Cronici Amalphitani Frag.*, c. i., p. 207.

NOTE 25.

"The Lombards fled the field—"

Page 203.

"The republics of Naples, Gaëta and Amalfi, preserved their independence by exciting enmity between the Lombards and Saracens; but the barbarians soon sank under the languor produced by a southern climate. It seemed they had no longer courage to risk a life to which so many enjoyments were attached. When they fought, it was with effeminacy; and they hastened the termination of every war, to plunge again into the voluptuous ease from which it roused them. The citizens of the republics had the advantage over them of walls and defiles; and, without being more brave than the Lombards, maintained their independence against them for six centuries."—*Sismondi*.

NOTE 26.

*"From that sad hour,
Amalfi, shorn of all her power—"*

Page 206.

"Amalfi, illustrious for the foundation, in the Holy Land, of the hospital and military order of St. John of Jerusalem, for the invention of the compass, and for the preservation of the Pandects of Justinian, surrendered finally to the Normans in 1131. The leader of these last was Roger II., to whom the antipope Anicletus had, the preceding year, given the title of King of the Two Sicilies."—*Sismondi*.

END OF THE BRIDAL OF SALERNO.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

L I N E S

WRITTEN ON A HILL OVERLOOKING PART OF THE SOUTHERN
COAST OF ENGLAND.

ROB'D in a dim and cloudy veil
Art thou, mysterious main !
O'er thy expanse, a wandering sail
Mine eye hath sought in vain.

Like a vast curtain from on high,
Fring'd with a belt of foam,
Is the sea of mist that shrouds the sky,
And hides the deep in gloom.

No half-defin'd horizon greets
The baffled sight afar,
To mark the line where ocean meets,
And fades into the air ;

But sea and sky commix'd appear,
And, murmuring through the gloom,
The breakers' distant roar I hear,
Sounding with measur'd boom.

E'en as I look, a ray doth steep
In light the misty veil,
And o'er a circlet of the deep,
Streams down in lustre pale.

Though all around be hid in cloud,
Yet still that circlet gleams,
And through the heavy, vaporous shroud,
The sunshine faintly beams.

And now a little vessel glides
 Athwart that partial ray ;
In calm security it rides,
 Rejoicing on its way.

And now towards the curling sea
 Of mist, its course it veers,
Still sailing onwards rapidly—
 And now it disappears.

So in this world of care and grief,
 Of gloom, and mystery,
Is man's career—quick, transient, brief,
 Like the bark that glided by.

We know not whence he comes, nor where
 His final course he veers ;
He lingers for a moment here,
 And then he disappears.

I look'd again,—and all was dim,
That fleeting ray was gone;
When lo! far off, another gleam
In brighter glory shone!

Perchance the little bark, e'en now,
Although I see it not,
Cleaves the blue waves with gallant prow,
O'er yon bright, distant spot.

And so with man: we may not know
What course to him is given,
Yet deem the light that shone below,
Will beam on him in heaven—

The light that o'er the world's dark sea
With Faith's pure ray can shine,
And pierce the veil of mystery
With beams of love divine!

THE PAST.



THE Past contains the poetry of thought,
A living picture, a memorial fraught
With forms engraven deeply in the heart,
And feelings, which, though gone, once form'd a part
Of our own being—and, like a shadowy dream,
Have pass'd away; but oft life's gloomy stream,
Still darker and more sad when age draws nigh,
Glides on uncheer'd by aught save memory:
And then the love within the soul enshrin'd,
With days gone by and treasur'd thoughts combin'd,
Hallows each well-remember'd scene that dwells
Within the chill'd and lonely breast, and tells

Of things we priz'd in youth's brief, joyous day,—
Of friends whom death hath long since swept away ;
And bids us fondly look upon the time,
When our young years were in their vernal prime,—
When life was fresh and sparkling as a rill,
Just sprung to light and air from some green hill,
Where lovely objects still more lovely seem,
Reflected in the calm and limpid stream ;
Ere yet 'tis sullied in its wandering course,
Its gentle music changed to murmurs hoarse.
When o'er our buried hopes we vainly mourn,
We love to dwell on days that ne'er return,
When life, for then the bosom was at rest,
Shone with a light that cheer'd, not scorch'd the breast.

As in some picture of the distant time
When Raphael liv'd, and art was yet sublime,—
Where age hath spread its nameless magic o'er
The breathing canvas, and offend no more
The glare and sharpness of the recent tint,
And all to one deep, mellow'd tone is blent,—

Where yet the unfading line of beauty lives,
And nought but what is soft and pure survives,—
E'en so, how fair each former scene appears,
View'd through the dusky veil of vanish'd years!
The past, all chasten'd to one tender light,
Presents nought hurtful to the mental sight :
Most oft we dwell on that which best we lov'd,
Forgetting many a by-gone sorrow prov'd ;
Or if some mournful memory clouds the past,
We think with soften'd pain of griefs which did not last.

L I N E S.

Poor wanderer ! in thy tatter'd dress,
Emblem of abject wretchedness !
Thine eye is bright, thy cheek is pale,
And coldly blows the piercing gale :
That hollow cough, and hectic streak,
That frame with suffering worn and weak,
Proclaim that thou ere long shalt find
A refuge from the freezing wind,—
A resting-place where thou mayst lie,
Safe from the hard world's cruelty.

Yet thou wert once both young and fair,
And knew'st a mother's gentle care;
But now the wide world hath for thee,

 No friend in thy extremity,—
For friendship only is for those
Who feast, attir'd in sumptuous clothes.
Thy ragged garb, and humbled mien,
The lines where beauty once hath been,—
Thy glances which thy care reveal,
Thy brow, where grief hath set his seal,—
All tell that thou art sad and lone,
That all thy earthly hopes are flown,

 Oh, stricken and deserted one!
And yet thou nearer art to heaven
Than yon proud dame, to whom is given
The good things of this world to taste,
Till feeling is well-nigh effac'd—,
Till wrapp'd in self and life's vain morrow,
She wastes no thought on others' sorrow;
Well satisfied that twice a-week,
She prays at church with aspect meek,

But heart untam'd and full of pride,
 Impenitent, unsanctified !
And thou, proud lady ! pass not by
With look of scornful apathy :
The spirit those poor spoils enshrine,
Beams with a spark as bright as thine ;
But purified, and chasten'd down,
To fit it for a heavenly crown :
And ye shall soon be clad alike,
When Death, who spareth none, shall strike.

WILD AUTUMN WIND.

~~~~~

WILD autumn wind ! thou bring'st again  
The dreams of youth, a shadowy train ;  
And thy deep voice, with magic power,  
Summons the thoughts of childhood's hour ;—  
And words of love, not spoke in vain,  
And the light laugh of frolic glee,  
And silvery accents, sorrow-free—  
All these I seem to hear again  
In thy mysterious harmony !



Wild wind ! thy spell recalls a tone  
Of scenes and feelings past and gone ;  
Striking within the breast a chord,  
Whose music long hath sigh'd unheard ;  
And o'er my burthen'd heart once more  
The memories rise of days of yore.  
And thou, whose love was once so dear,  
Though long a tenant of the tomb,  
Thine image lightens through the gloom  
Of many a sad and by-gone year !  
And her's, who in the careless day  
Of boyhood shar'd my childish play,  
Though many a mile of stormy sea  
Now darkly rolls 'twixt her and me !

In the wild chorus of the gale,  
As it sighs with low and feeble wail,  
Or hundred-voic'd, with lofty strain,  
Sweeps o'er the loudly-pealing main,  
Forgotten tones again I hear  
Of those whose memory still is dear ;

And it tells full many a mournful tale  
Of faded hopes, and years of pain ;—  
Of schemes a dim, fantastic train,  
Long shrouded in time's misty veil,—  
And friends I ne'er shall meet again !  
Its plaintive music sounds to me  
A requiem to their memory ;  
While with a deep, prophetic tone,  
It bodes a future sad and lone.  
Remembrance thus beguiles the heart  
With dreams that all too soon depart,  
Leaving the solitary breast  
Still with its lonely cares oppress'd :  
Then, autumn wind ! recal no more  
The voices of those days of yore !

## FAREWELL.



THAT bitter word,—Farewell! Farewell!  
Sounds on the ear a mournful knell,  
Whose faltering accents darkly tell  
Of death, and gloom, and sorrow,—  
Of friends, and scenes, well-lov'd—in vain!—  
Of cheerful hearts, now weigh'd with pain,—  
Of those we ne'er shall meet again,—  
Of life's sad dreary morrow!

Farewell ! Farewell ! the blithe and gay  
Are doom'd on some dark, future day  
To part from those they love, for aye,

And speak those words of sorrow :  
Yes, though they smile, e'en they will feel  
The wound that time may never heal,  
'Gainst which in vain the heart we steel,  
And still look to the morrow !

And when will that bright morrow come,  
For which we look through years of gloom,  
And say that happier days *will* come,

All free from care and sorrow ?  
Ah ! who of all of us may say,—  
E'en they who seem'd so blithe and gay,  
That on life's sad and weary way,  
They've known that cloudless morrow ?

## N I G H T.

~~~~~

NIGHT's dewy mantle falls around,
And rises clear the moon,
Whose gentle beams throw o'er the woods
A pale and mellow'd noon,—
Revealing objects fair and bright,
But lovelier seen in her sweet light.

Calm hour! thy witchery calls to mind
The blessed days gone by,
When care and sorrow were unknown,
And life sped merrily ;
Ere sad experience had effaced
The visions youthful fancy traced.

~~~~~

The voices of the lov'd and lost  
Again I seem to hear ;  
The mournful music of the grave  
Steals sadly o'er mine ear :  
For one dear moment I might deem  
My waking fancies were no dream !

Pale night ! I bless thine influence,  
And own thy mystic power  
To wake the spirit of the past,  
At thine own solemn hour ;  
To tell the soul of things that were,  
And charm away the fiend Despair :

For having been, they still must be,  
Since love may never die ;  
The good, the true, must rise again  
To life and immortality.  
Surely the spirits of the dead have power  
To whisper this at midnight's solemn hour !

## SONNET.

WRITTEN ON THE SEA-SHORE.

~~~~~

To me the sounding ocean ever bore
A tone of wild, mysterious melody,
Mournful and deep, but yet of meaning high,
When roaming on the loudly-pealing shore,
I've listen'd to the hoarse and sullen roar !
In youth's gay fleeting morn, my home was nigh
The wild sea-banks ; and oft, in times gone by,
I wander'd there with one, alas ! no more,
And heard the low, sweet tones of anxious love
Distinct amid the winds' and waves' rude strife ;
And now, methinks, I hear them still above
The ceaseless roar, although the tongue is still
Which utter'd them. So Hope's soft whisperings fill
The breast, amid the troubled sea of life.

~~~~~

## FRIENDSHIP.



It seems not very long ago since thou and I were friends,  
And now we meet with looks estrang'd,—thus early friendship ends!  
Yet I remember well the time when life was fresh and gay,  
And our young hearts ne'er dreamt that thus our love should fade away.

But all we see on earth must change,—the flowers, the fields, the trees,—  
E'en Nature's self new forms assumes by slow though sure degrees ;  
And *we* too change,—alas ! how soon life's vernal bloom is gone !  
But we ourselves mark not the change, while time still hurries on.



And those who lov'd in early youth, ere yet the heart was chill'd,  
Forget, perchance, how many a pang since then that heart hath thrill'd;  
That cold distrust, and wounded pride, and sense of bitter wrong,  
Have banish'd all the glowing thoughts that unto youth belong.

And thus we meet with looks estrang'd, and ancient feelings dead,—  
For that which bound thy heart to mine—youth's confidence, is fled !  
Friendship is but a dream below, the form we ne'er may find,  
A memory of our early days, within our hearts enshrin'd ;—

A flower unfit for earth's cold clime, where soon it droops and dies,—  
A shadow of that better life, to which we all may rise :  
A dream of the mysterious land from whence the spirit came,  
Art thou, oh, love ! ere yet the world hath dimm'd thy virgin flame.

## SONNET.

IMITATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

WHEN, through the veil of many a vanish'd year,  
 Thou call'st to mind a transient thought of me,  
 Thinking on one who only liv'd for thee,  
 Wilt thou not shed a tributary tear,  
 And breathe one passing sigh, to memory dear,  
 And him, who wore his weary days in pain—  
 Who suffered much,—but yet did ne'er complain?  
 Ah! pause awhile amid thy bright career,  
 Nor, though thou 'rt happy, bid thy heart disdain  
 To muse upon his sorrows once again;  
 And pitying, weep his sad and gloomy fate,  
 Whose only fault was to have lov'd in vain:  
 And when thy heart, with Heaven's good gifts elate,  
 Swells high, let memory soften—not give pain!

## SONNET.

~~~~~  
Spring.

TIME, on swift wing, calls back the flowery Spring,
 And streams, releas'd from icy fetters, glide
 Exultingly, and with redoubled tide
 Speed to their parent-sea. On joyous wing
 At heaven's blue gate the feather'd warblers sing
 Their welcome, as they skim through ether wide.
 Now woods and fields, adorn'd in vernal pride,
 Upon the gale a dewy freshness fling
 From the young leaves, that soft, low murmurs pour,
 Proclaiming festal Summer comes, all fraught
 With sweets from many a rainbow-tinted flower—
 From hyacinthine beds, in purple wrought;—
 The Spring returns ! but to the heart ne'er more
 Comes back the fleeting bloom of early thought !

SONNET.

Summer.

BRIGHT Summer ! rich in golden fruits, and flowers
 Of brilliant hue and delicate perfume,
 At thy approach the varied fields assume
 A brighter robe ; and green and shady bowers,
 Where oft I dream away the sultry hours,
 Seem all besprent with light and fragrant bloom :
 The earth, from out her ever bounteous womb,
 With eagerness her golden tribute pours
 To welcome thee. Hail, glorious Summer, hail !
 Inspire our hearts to own with grateful praise
 His goodness, still unchangeable, who bade
 The seasons roll, and made the sun, whose rays,
 All quickening, light and food afford ; and tell
 Of love, and wondrous power for us display'd !

L I N E S.

~~~~~  
 " Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
 Unseen." . . . . .

MILTON.

~~~~~

Is not the air around thee stirr'd by those who lov'd thee?
 Think'st thou that death can loose the chains that bound the soul?
 Or break the bonds of feeling which in absence mov'd thee,
 The union of the mind that owns not earth's control?

Think'st thou that love can wither, like the flowers that perish
 And droop beneath the chilling blight of Autumn's baleful sigh?
 Or that the viewless beings whose memory we cherish,
 Whose souls were link'd to ours, forget us when they die?

Their spirits wander near us, on the night-wind sighing,
Or wafted with the breath of scented violet pale;
And oft, when evening breezes slow to rest are dying,
We seem to hear them whispering on the fitful gale.

Like as the odour liveth when the flower hath faded,
And fills the neighbouring air the live-long summer night,
Is love, still hovering near, although in death are shaded
The eyes, that once for us beam'd with its holy light.

SONNET.

~~~~~

*Winter.*

WREATH'D in a coronal of glittering snow,  
 Lo ! Winter comes to rule the drooping year  
 For his appointed space. All dark and drear  
 The forests shrink before his footsteps slow ;  
 And flowers that bloom'd beneath the Summer's glow  
 In gay profusion, now with branches sear,  
 And wither'd, pale, and spectral leaves appear  
 To mourn the past, ere yet they sink below ;  
 But they will rise again in joyous Spring,  
 And to the gale their odours freshly fling :  
 While we, when Winter's emblem—age, shall come,  
 And with it dull decay and torpor bring,  
 May hope no second Spring to change our doom,  
 Nor look on earth beyond the silent tomb !

## SNOWDON.

~~~~~

I sit alone on my cloudy throne,
 High sovereign of the vale;
 I robe my breast in its regal vest
 Of misty vapours pale:
 Or I crown my brow with a wreath of snow,
 That glitters beneath the sun,
 Then softly gleams in the moon's pale beams,
 When his glorious race is done:
 Rugged and bare through the deep blue air
 Sometimes I lift my brow,
 And from my height survey the night,
 As it creeps o'er the plains below.

The cataract's roar—from the pealing shore
 The voice of the stormy main—
 Seem mingled in one majestic tone,
 One deep and solemn strain,

[illegible]

I'll walk the soil when the day is done
 In the wide and yellow waste
 He walks not now with a purple glow
 And back he turned the last
 When day drops dark in the west
 Of the sea and setting sun
 And sleeping flowers in their early hours
 Are stirred by the morning breeze
 Though he saw the last ere it had been
 When his daily toil had ceased
 He salutes me first with the early hours
 Of his glow in the east

E'en when the night of the hurricane's might
Gathers in darkness around,
And lightnings flash, and thunders crash,
And howling winds resound,
I lift my head from its cloudy bed,
Unscath'd by the meteor's blaze,
Remov'd afar from the stormy war,
I bask in the sun's warm rays :
What matters to me the tempest's glee,
Or the angry lightning's wreath ?
I laugh aloud through my vaporious shroud,
As the thunder rolls beneath.

Sometimes I sleep when the moonbeams weep
Their purest, holiest dew,
And the stilly air seems fill'd with prayer,
And the sky is cloudless blue.
Sweet melodies veer from sphere to sphere,
Through the boundless depths of heaven,
In search of a home they widely roam,
On viewless pinions driven :

But I can hear their warbling clear
Amid the silent night,
As they flutter by through the starry sky
In their wild and airy flight.

But when the car rattles through the air,
On which the tempest rides ;
When winds are loud and a misty shroud
Envelopes my craggy sides ;
Then fearful groans, and voiceless moans,
I hear on the midnight blast,
While the air resounds with horrid sounds
That echo through the waste ;
And shrieking ghosts in shadowy hosts
Flit past me on the gale,
Through the moonless sky as the storm raves high,
And the fitful stars shine pale.

Like him whose hope lies beyond the scope
Of mortal vision's gaze,
Around whose head is a halo spread
Of Faith's celestial rays ;
Who stands unmov'd by misfortune prov'd,
Nor heeds the tempest's strife,
For he sees afar, mid the world's rude war,
Visions of light and life ;
So at my feet the hurricanes beat,
And my breast with storms is riven,
But my crest soars high in its own blue sky,
In the clear serene of heaven !

MY FOREFATHER'S TOMB.



Oh! the white stone that gleams in the lonely church-yard,
And marks out the place of my forefather's tomb!
Oft I think of that stone when the world presses hard,
And it brings me no thought of dejection or gloom:

But rather a haven of rest it appears,
Where the friends of my infancy quiet have found;
And though oft I have wept there—not vainly—my tears
Were blent with a feeling of calmness profound.

There sweetly she rests from her travail and sorrow,
Who unwearied, in childhood, watch'd over my way ;
From her sleep she will wake to no dark, gloomy morrow,
But her rising will be to the brightness of day.

She is gone where rude clamour no more shall alarm her,
In silent repose her last doom to await ;
Where the dexterous malice of friends cannot harm her,—
The gibes of the little,—the scorn of the great.

And though I am left in the wide world alone,
The thought of her love hath not died in my breast ;
Still the memory of parents and friends who are gone,
Sheds a gleam o'er my soul when I'm sad and depress'd.

For I know that their love was not given in vain,
To wither away like the flower of the field,—
Or vanish like meteors that flash o'er the plain,
Whose light disappears ere 'tis fully reveal'd.

MY FOREFATHER'S TOMB.

O for what should we look on this side of the tomb,
 We have felt that the hopes we have leam'd on are vain,—
 The weariness, sorrow, and tears are the doom
 And we sojourn in this region of pain?

That very sorrow I vainly repine that they left me,
 The friends at my youth, who have but gone before?
 Since thought death for a time of their love hath bereft me,
 How we may meet or be parted no more!

There in white stone the gleams in the lonely church-yard,
 As a smile of the sun in the moon's placid ray,
 The attention of me in its passive regard,
 Like that of a star when the smiles of the gay.

When I stand where the cold world's unkindness I prove,
 I stand where the sun's soft-glancing stone;
 I stand where the stars shine, surely from whom we love,
 And where the sun's rays when all others are gone!

L I N E S.

POOR wanderer ! still wouldst thou wildly roam ?
Oh ! return to the scenes of thy childhood's home ;
Thy wounded spirit hath need of balm,
And sweet retirement, and holy calm.

I know by thy cheek, all pale with care,
By thy restless eye, and abstracted air,
By thy mournful smile, in which joy hath no part,
That thou bear'st a lonely, stricken heart,—

And thou wanderest in search of a land of rest,
Where peace may return to thy weary breast ;
But the land which thy spirit pines for, lies
In a far distant region beyond the skies !

Then cease, poor restless wanderer ! cease
To hope mid the world's vain joys for peace,
Or in bright lands over the wild sea's foam,—
Oh ! return to the scenes of thy childhood's home.

Thou wilt hear thy mother's voice again
Mid the whispering leaves, and the birds' wild strain,
And the laugh of youth shall resound in thine ear,—
Thou shalt dream that the lost ones again are near !

And the very air of thy childhood's home,
O'er thy pale and throbbing brow will come
With a gracious freshness,—for 'tis the same
Play'd round thee once, ere sorrow came.

Though lone and deserted be that home,
Which for many a year thou hast wander'd from,
Yet its scenes shall recal the days of old,
Ere 'twas slighted to follow the heartless and cold :

And the murmuring brook, the wind's soft sigh,
Will speak to thy bosom lovingly ;
Their familiar music a tone will impart
Of the freshness of youth to thy faded heart.

Then return to the scenes of thy childhood's home,
Nor in search of oblivion vainly roam ;
Thou mayst wander afar—but not forget,
For the barb of sorrow will rankle yet :

And think that thy bitterest trials were given
To call thy wandering thoughts to heaven ;
Let thy hope on the world where love fades not rest,
And peace will return to thy weary breast.

L I N E S .

RECLIN'D upon a moss-grown seat,
In some leafy, calm retreat,
Let me dreams of old recal,
Listening to the water-fall !
And let the wild bee's drowsy hum,
Mix'd with leaves' light music come,
With note of mavis warbling near,
In gentle murmurs o'er mine ear :
Then, as I listen to the stream,
And scent the fragrant breath of flowers,
Oh ! let me weave some airy dream,
To while away the sultry hours ;

And shed a light upon the gloom
Of life, like roses o'er a tomb,
Which still in summer-beauty glow,
Though all, alas ! be sad and dark below.

But thoughts that flow'd in busy stream,
Now chain'd in icy fetters seem ;
In vain I strive to break the band,
And wave again sweet fancy's wand,
Which once had power to summon all
Could make dull life a festival,
And dress in colours bright and gay
The joyous morrow of each day ;
Bidding me on the future look,
Like page of some enchanted book,
Where nothing gloomy meets the eye,
No trait of sorrowful reality.

And when those blissful days are o'er,
And fancy's dreams can charm no more—

No more have power to cheat the breast,
Or lull one bitter thought to rest,—
'Tis sweet to ponder on the spell,
Which o'er the heart like dew-drops fell—
The magic spell of hope and youth,
And ne'er-forgotten love and truth ;
And of the time long past and gone,
Whose memory rises like a strain
Of recollected music, known
When life was yet undimm'd by pain ;
When wandering in the forest, lost
In mazes of delicious thought,
No cold distrust our visions cross'd,
Nor marr'd our dreams with brilliant augury fraught.

But all too swift such moments haste
To the wide ocean of the past,—
That dark and misty sea—the tomb
Of buried hopes—whose billows moan
A solemn requiem o'er the doom
Of empires dead, and ages flown ;

Whose waves still on our pathway swell,
With motion scarce perceptible,
Until the days of childhood seem
But as some brief and happy dream.
And when that fairy dream is gone,
And we are in the world alone,
With fond regret we learn to dwell
On days and scenes we lov'd so well ;
When gaily flew the winged hours,
And hope and confidence were ours ;
Ere time had chill'd the aching heart,
And bade its lightsome tone for aye depart !

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 2. 支票的有效期为自签发之日起六个月内。
 3. 支票的金额不得超过账户余额。
 4. 支票的签发人必须为账户持有人。
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 7. 支票的签发必须加盖预留印鉴。
 8. 支票的签发必须使用本行规定的支票格式。
 9. 支票的签发必须使用本行规定的支票用纸。
 10. 支票的签发必须使用本行规定的支票印章。

Am chang'd,—alas ! how chang'd and sad,
From that sweet time when all seem'd glad !
And of the once light-hearted crew,
Who then with me youth's pleasures knew,
The dearest and the best are gone :
The rest, perchance, like me have known,
That ere our spring-time scarce is gone,
The heart is often sad and lone.

Have nine long summers pass'd away,
Since link'd with young companions gay,—
The warm friends of my vernal day,—
And buoy'd on Hope's enchanted wing,
I heard the brook's soft murmuring ?
'Tis true ! and yet it seems to me
But yesterday since, sorrow-free,
I roam'd these flowery meadows last ;
Till gloomy retrospection flings
Her mantle o'er the past, and brings
The memory back of sorrows past :

The loss of friends I held so dear,
Who've fled, and left me lonely here,—
Hopes fondly cherish'd—but in vain,
And wept through lingering years of pain,—
Visions of bliss long past away,—
All crowded seem into a day !
Why makes the brook sweet music still ?
Why laughs the pure and limpid rill,
As on it flows o'er sands of gold,
As fresh and sparkling as of old ?
Is it to mock the aching heart,
And bid the tear of anguish start ?
Or tell the weary soul of love,
Pure and exhaustless from above ;
Bidding the mourner think of One
Who careth for the sad and lone !

POEMS FOR MUSIC.

POEMS FOR MUSIC.

PALE EVENING FALLS.

PALE evening falls, the sun hath dropp'd beneath the west,
And wearied Nature sinks to deep and solemn rest ;
At this dim, silent hour my thought to thee returns
Who wert my earliest friend, whom yet my spirit mourns.

Pale evening falls, the dews are gathering chill and fast,
I think of that sad time when we two parted last :
'Twas at this very hour—we never met again—
That I was left to mourn through long, long years of pain.

REGRET THEE!



REGRET thee! Couldst thou only know,
How oft my thoughts are fix'd on thee!
Mid sleepless nights, when hours creep slow,
Thine image still revisits me;
I think upon the distant day,
When first we met in joyous youth,
When all seem'd bright in hope's pure ray,
And being true, we deem'd all truth.

And though on time's dark, ceaseless tide
Those happy days are long since gone,
Thine image seems identified
With all the precious moments flown ;
When thou, on whom my heart was plac'd,
Wert all of good to me was given,
An emblem of the blissful past,
An earnest of a future heaven.

But soon, too soon, I learnt to rue
The coldness of thy fickle heart ;
Too soon with bitter tears I knew
That thou hadst play'd a treacherous part ;
That, like a bark whose anchor's cast
Upon a shifting, perilous shore,
All, all on which my hopes were plac'd,
Had vanish'd to return no more.

Still I regret thee, and forgive
The cruel wrong—thy broken faith—
My blighted hopes—the pangs that live—
The desolation of my path :
Though thou, inconstant ! couldst forget
The vows thou once didst plight to me,
After long years my heart e'en yet
Reverts with fond regret to thee !

WHEN MEMORY THROWS HER LIGHT.



WHEN Memory throws her light upon
The scenes of by-gone years,
And through the gloomy lapse of time,
Dimly the past appears;
When with full hearts we vainly trace
Dear forms which yet we mourn,
Ah! then, how fair and brilliant seem
The days which ne'er return!

We think upon the friends of youth,—
Those friends so kind and true,
Whose love we ne'er shall find again,
Whose smiles our childhood knew :
And oft at midnight's lonely hour
Their tones we seem to hear,
And shadowy forms of other days
In darkness hover near.

We feel as those around whose path,
Even now all bright and gay,
A dark and chilling cloud hath fallen,
That hides the face of day ;
Yet Hope's mild radiance still hath power
To pierce the neighbouring gloom,
And we deem our youth again will spring
More bright beyond the tomb !

COME AGAIN!

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COME again! A gloom o'ershades  
Many a breast, when thou'rt away;  
A mournful silence fills the glades,  
A cloud obscures the face of day.

Oh, come again! Why stayest thou?  
Oft we miss thee—come again!  
We see thine own place vacant now,  
And check the rising sigh in vain!

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Then come ! and glad us once again :

Many a greeting waits thee here,—

Many a bosom heaves with pain,—

In bright eyes trembles oft a tear !

Think on the hearts that beat for thee,

Think of the love they waste in vain :

Oh ! time creeps slow and mournfully

When thou 'rt away—then come again !

Oh ! come again.

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THY CHEEK IS PALE, AND WILD THINE EYE.

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Thy cheek is pale, and wild thine eye—

Thy quivering lip oft tells,  
Amid thy frantic revelry,

The secret grief that dwells  
Within thy bosom, shar'd by none,  
Oh, lonely and deserted one!

How many a bitter thought of pain

That reckless laugh conceals—  
That hollow smile, assum'd in vain

To hide what it reveals:  
The unheeded sigh, the restless start,  
Will still betray the aching heart!

## WHEN WRECK'D ON LIFE'S TEMPESTUOUS SEA.

FROM THE ITALIAN.

WHEN wreck'd on life's tempestuous sea,  
I oft bewail delusive hope,  
Sometimes a passing thought of thee  
Can cheer me when my spirits droop ;  
When mingling with the heartless group  
I seem to share its levity,  
And e'en to folly deign to stoop,  
My secret thoughts are still with thee.

They ever turn to thee alone,  
For thou hast been a resting-place  
Of memory—the only one  
Green spot remembrance loves to trace :  
Thine image, with its nameless grace,  
Still haunts me as I wander on,  
Though since I look'd upon thy face,  
How many a lingering year hath flown !

**'TIS SWEET TO STRAY BY VERDANT BANKS.**

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'Tis sweet to stray by verdant banks
And hear the streamlet's play,
Where once we rov'd in happier days
With those who're far away :
We seem to hear sweet laughter in
The rippling of the stream,
To hear glad voices once again,
That haunt us like a dream !

And oh ! 'twas sweet in youth's gay time,
 The sorrow's cloud had passed,
To wander here with those we loved,
 Whose smile each pasture graced ;
With them to rove amid these bowers,
 When bloom'd the violet pale,
Or beds of clustering roses pour'd
 Their fragrance on the gale.

When after many a year of gloom
 We visit youth's gay scene,
We seem to miss the lapse of years,
 To view the past again ;
But soon, alas ! too soon we wake,—
 The blissful dream is o'er ;
We start to find ourselves alone,
 And young and blithe no more !

FOR A GLEE.

SINCE every hope we hold most dear
Seems form'd but to beguile ;
Since love betrays, and friends we find
Inconstant as the fleeting wind,
We'll fill the goblet high, for there
Lurks no deceit or guile.

Then let the wine-cup, mantling high,
Its generous influence rain,
Embalming with bright purple tears
The memory of by-gone years ;
Till spell-bound by sweet harmony,
We live the past again.

EVENING.

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WHEN the pale star of evening gleams,  
'Tis sweet to view the fairy beams  
First glimmer faint and dim on high,  
Then brighten in the rosy sky;  
And sweet to hear the vesper-bell,  
Borne on the light and breezy swell  
Of summer-evening's balmy sigh,  
Peal forth its welcome melody.

And when the pensive queen of night  
Hath tipp'd the woods with silvery light,  
And fill'd the air with radiance pale,  
While music trembles on the gale,  
How sweet to trip it in the glade,  
Beneath the cypress' quivering shade;  
Or whisper gentle tales of love,  
Wandering in the olive-grove!

MIDNIGHT.  

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How softly breathes the balmy air  
O'er summer-groves, and meadows fair !  
No sound to break the poet's dream,  
Save of the leaves and purling stream :  
And memory at this silent hour  
Hath a more deep, resistless power,  
And with strange, mysterious spell,  
Recals the scenes once lov'd so well.

And now, while moonlight plays around,  
And beams upon the flowery ground,  
The gnomes prolong their banquet late,  
From golden cup and daisy plate ;  
Till fill'd with showers of sparkling dew,  
They frolic 'neath the lofty yew,  
Or trip in circlets o'er the green,  
In honour of the fairy-queen.

## MY SPIRIT DROOPETH.

My spirit droopeth—like a lamp  
Whose brilliancy is dead—  
Whose rays are chill'd by vapours damp,  
Whose light and warmth are fled.  
If hope illumes my faded heart,  
'Tis like that wavering light,  
Which flashes ere its rays depart,  
Then leaves all dark as night.

When life was dimm'd, thine image passed  
Before me like a dream,  
And thoughts of early days retrac'd,  
When freshly flow'd life's stream;  
But like that pale and trembling ray,  
That glimmers, and is gone,  
My new-born hopes soon died away,  
And left me doubly lone.

# BARCAROLLE

Gently row, gondolier !  
 O'er the blue and moonlit deep ;  
 Steer thy bark, gondolier !  
 Where cooest swallows softly creep :  
 The heavens above all calm appear,  
 And mirror-like the sparkling sea ;  
     Through the air,  
     From afar,  
 Come notes of distant melody !

Oh ! the night seems more bright,  
 While we thus o'er the waters sweep ;  
 And side by side, our souls resign  
 To thoughts, for words to breathe too deep :  
     Gently row athwart the brine,  
 On to the wide and open sea ;  
     While from afar,  
     Through the air,  
 Come notes of distant melody.

Gently row, gondolier !  
Half the night is scarcely o'er ;  
Gently row, till dawn appear,  
Far from the cold and gloomy shore :  
As yet the moon in heaven is high,  
And fairy barks are glancing by ;  
Still through the air,  
From afar,  
Come wandering notes of melody !

THE END.





